

SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF THE PUNJAB
(Late Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Century)

A

THESIS

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PREFACE

The present work deals with the socio-cultural life of the people of Punjab during the period from AD 1765 to 1849. This period is significant in the history of the Punjab. It was a period of the decline of Mughal-Afghan rule and the emergence of the Sikhs as the sovereign rulers. They emerged as the rulers of Punjab entirely on the strength of their own arms and presaged the building up of a kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Several scholars have focused on the political, administrative and economic history of the period. In the 1920s and the 1930s Sita Ram Kohli's *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* and G.L. Chopra's, *Punjab as a Sovereign State* were published. During the post independence period Fauja Singh's *Military System of the Sikhs*, J.S. Grewal's *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, B.J. Hasrat's *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Indu Banga's, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Radha Sharma's, *Peasantry and the State* and Veena Sachdeva's, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab during the Late Eighteenth Century* are important contribution to comprehend these aspects of the history of Punjab. Some of these works do refer to the society and culture of the Punjab during this period but it is not their major concern.

Fauja Singh's *Some Aspects of State and Society under Maharaja Ranjit Singh* primarily deals with nature of state and society. As far as society is concerned only such aspects have been noticed as carry the significance of being indicative of the impact of the state policies. Therefore, the structure of the society does not fall in the scope of the work. J.S. Grewal's *Polity, Economy and Society*, explores the social, economic and cultural history of the early 19th century Punjab in a manner that adds a new dimension to our understanding of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. These lectures as the author himself admits are more of exploratory than definitive nature though based on empirical evidence.

Daljinder Singh Johal's doctoral thesis, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature (1750-1850)*, has dealt with the social and cultural life of the Punjab as presented in Punjabi literature during mid 18th and mid 19th centuries. It is a pioneering work on the subject based on secular Punjabi literature. Kulwinder Singh Bajwa in his doctoral thesis, *Historical Analysis of Early Nineteenth Century European Travel Literature on the Punjab*, has analyzed travel literature, which

among other aspects, focuses on society as understood by European travellers who visited Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Social life of the Punjab was however not his major concern. Moreover the information from these accounts is at variance with one another.

An attempt, therefore, has been made to bring out various aspects of socio-cultural life of the people of Punjab. Social and cultural life can not be divorced from the political life of the people. An effort has been made to build up socio-cultural history in the larger context of political conditions of the Punjab during the late 18th and early 19th century. The present study covers the core dominions of the kingdom of Lahore including the British districts of Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Jhang, Gujrat, Shahpur, Rawalpindi and Jhelum.

During the period under review, the Punjab presented a picture of rapid political changes. With the decline of Mughal-Afghan rule Punjab was divided into numerous principalities and states. Maharaja Ranjit Singh unified the territories of the Punjab into a kingdom, sovereign in all aspects. This was an important development having far reaching consequences for the society and culture of the Punjab. The Punjabi society experienced changes in their observance of castes, customs, rituals, dresses, food, celebration of festivals and fairs, games, literature and many other aspects of the social and cultural life.

The present study is divided in eight chapters. The first chapter is introduction of political situation of the Punjab during the eighteenth century. It was a period of struggle between the Sikhs, Afghan and Mughal governors. The Sikhs emerged successful in eliminating them and at last the Punjab was unified in to a kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Second chapter is a detailed analysis of the social structure of the Punjabi society which was based on an hierarchical structure. Social structure was dominated by the ruling class. Ruling class of Lahore Darbar was heterogeneous which included people of all classes, castes, religions and regions. Religious class was an influential section of the society. Economy was run by mercantile classes in which Khatris and Bantias were predominant. Professional classes like *dums*, *bhats* and *mirasis* played important role in society. They were source of entertainment. With their special talent they had important place in the

social order. Without the participation of artisans and menial classes no society can run smoothly. They had an indispensable role to play in rural as well as in urban economy. The third chapter is devoted to the gender relations with particular reference to the position of women. They were considered as inferior sex in comparison to male members. Though they had dominant position in household affairs yet the ultimate decisions were taken by the patriarchy. In spite of her handicapped position, woman was indispensable. In the wedding ceremonies she was considered as centre of attraction. An attempt has been made to underline the political role played by some women of the period as well. Rani Raj Kaur, Sada Kaur and Maharani Jind Kaur had played important role in the politics of Lahore Darbar. These characters, however, have been dealt with as exceptions. Fourth chapter is devoted to material comforts in which the houses of the people, their food, dresses and ornaments are discussed. Material comforts reflected the economic as well as social standard of the people. Means of recreation in which fairs, festivals, games and professional entertainers were included are discussed in detail in fifth chapter. People amused themselves with these sources of entertainment. For the rural population they served twin purpose- religious as well as economic. In human life birth, marriage and death are significant events around which are fabricated numerous customs, rites and ceremonies. These customs, rites and ceremonies are discussed in sixth chapter. There were formal, ceremonial acts or procedure prescribed in religious or other solemn use, which has the force of law. These varied on the basis of caste, community and religion. Besides these there were ceremonies like coronation, victories in wars and addition of new territory which were celebrated on grand scales. Literature which is considered as mirror of the society is discussed in detail in the seventh chapter. During this period various types of literature like *varan*, *jangnama*, *si-harfi*, *jhagre*, *janjan*, religious, historical and romantic were produced for the masses. Eighth chapter deals with the concluding remarks. It is followed by appendix, glossary and bibliography.

The study is based on a variety of primary sources like contemporary and near contemporary works written in Persian, Urdu and Punjabi, Travel Accounts, Official publications like Gazetteer and Census Reports. A number of secondary sources have

been consulted including Encyclopedia, Books and Research Articles. Ph.D Thesis and M.Phil Dissertations have also been found useful in our analysis.

In the course of this study, I have received considerable help from several libraries. I am thankful to the staff of the State Archives of Patiala, the Department of Historical Studies and the Department of History, Punjabi University Patiala. I am highly grateful to the staff of Bhai Gurdas Library and the library of the Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Sikh History Research Library, Khalsa College, Amritsar and Sikh Reference Library, Golden Temple, Amritsar and Moti Lal Nehru Municipal Corporation Library, Amritsar.

I owe my gratitude to a number of individuals. First and for most, I am thankful to my supervisor, Professor Radha Sharma, Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, for her inspiration and seasoned guidance. She was a constant source of inspiration for me throughout the execution of work. She was quite generous to spare her time whenever I required. I am extremely thankful to Professor Harish C. Sharma for constant encouragement at every stage of this study. I am thankful to Professor Sukhdev Singh Sohal, the head Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University for moral support. I am thankful to Dr. Aziz Abbas and Professor Barkat Ali for their timely help and support at all levels to understand Urdu and Persian writings. I am indebted to these individuals and institutions for their cooperation

Lastly, I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not express my deep sense of gratitude towards my family for the encouragement and emotional support over the years.

(Renu Bala)

CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Punjab in the early eighteenth century was preceded by a succession of events which began with the execution of Banda Bahadur in 1716 A.D. The execution was followed by the persecution of the Sikhs in the hands of the successive Mughal governors and the occupation of the Punjab by Ahmad Shah Abdali. The struggle for supremacy among the Afghan and the Sikhs resulted in emergence of the Sikhs as a political power. The Sikh chiefs, major and minor, occupied Punjab plains between the Sutlej and the Indus. The internal strife of the chiefs in the last quarter of the eighteenth century ended in the emergence of a powerful kingdom of Lahore under Ranjit Singh in the early nineteenth century.

In the second decade of the eighteenth century, Banda Bahadur had been able to conquer a number of territories and had become the master of almost whole of Sirhind division, Bist Jalandhar *doab*, district of Amritsar and Gurdaspur and a few *parganas* of Saharanpur division in western Uttar Pradesh.¹ In these areas Banda Bahadur established sovereign rule, made his own administrative arrangements, struck a new coin in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh and used his own seal on his orders.² He also tried to capture Lahore, the provincial capital, but failed. Banda was eventually besieged and captured by Abdus Samad Khan at Gurdas Nangal and was executed in 1716³ and the Sikh rule could not sustain after his execution.

The Punjab from 1716 to 1752 was ruled by four Mughal governors, Abdus Samad Khan, Zakariya Khan, Yahya Khan and Muin ul Mulk (Mir Mannu). The tendency of the Mughal governors was to perpetuate themselves in the province

¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1935, 13; J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, 83; Gurdev Singh Deol, *Banda Bahadur*, New Academic Publishing, Jullundur, 1972, 33-55.

² J.S. Grewal, *Eighteenth Century Sikh Polity From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh Eassy in Sikh History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1972, 40; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs: Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1978, 11.

³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1982, 27-34; J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Polity, Economy and Society*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 2.

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during the weakening of imperial authority at the centre. Since they were successful in maintaining themselves as governors in the Punjab, threat to their positions could come from two sources: foreign invasions and internal uprising. Since the stakes were high the Mughal governors followed two types of policy against the internal revolts: repression and pacification or conciliation.

The immediate problem for the Sikhs was how to escape from persecution without giving up their ideals and attitude of independence.⁴ Abdus Samad Khan the Governor of Lahore, undertook strong measures for suppression of the Sikhs. During his tenure till 1726, the Sikhs had started organizing resistance to the Mughal officials. His successor Zakariya Khan too adopted a vigorous policy of repression against the Sikhs and simultaneously he tried to pacify the Sikh leaders by offering them revenue free grants. He persuaded the emperor to confer a robe of honour and title of *nawab* on the chosen leader of the Sikhs, and gave them a large grant of several villages near Amritsar from which they could collect revenue.⁵ The title of *nawab* and the robe of honour were accepted by Kapur Singh Faizullapuria.⁶ But the *jagir* did not pacify the Sikhs as Zakariya Khan had hoped. He was continuously challenged by the Sikhs. After being thwarted in his designs, in the late 1730s, Zakariya Khan ordered the execution of *bhai* Mani Singh. The killing of the pious and venerable head priest caused deep resentment among the Sikhs. But before they could retaliate, the situation changed with dramatic suddenness with the news of a Persian invasion from the northwest.⁷

The invasion of the Persian ruler Nadir Shah in 1739-40 had an adverse effect not only on the Mughal empire but also on Zakariya Khan's position in the province of Lahore. Nadir Shah obliged the Mughal emperor to cede the Trans-Indus provinces of the Mughal empire to him. His invasion denuded Delhi of its riches and obliged

⁴ Kirpal Singh, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (ed.), Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1965, 124-25.

⁵ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 12-13; S. Muzzafar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India, Awadh and the Punjab (1707-1748)*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986, 77.

⁶ Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* (ed.) Bhai Vir Singh, Wazir-i- Hind Press, Amritsar, 1962, 213-14; Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986, 123.

⁷ Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Oriental Longmans, Bombay, 1950, 111; Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 125.

Zakariya Khan to re-establish his hold over the province.⁸ After Nadir Shah's invasion there prevailed chaos and confusion in the Punjab of which full advantage was taken by the Sikhs. They organized themselves in groups.⁹

After Zakariya Khan, Yahiya Khan became the governor of Lahore. During his governorship, the Sikhs received a serious setback known as *chhota ghallughara* or small holocaust from Diwan Lakhpat Rai, whose brother Jaspat Rai, the *faujdar* of Eminabad was killed in a skirmish with the Sikhs. Diwan Lakhpat Rai led the Mughal army against the Sikhs in the marshes of Kahnawan and about 7,000 Sikhs were killed in a single action.¹⁰ In 1748, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Punjab on the invitation of Shah Nawaj (brother of Yahiya Khan). His first invasion was unsuccessful. The Mughal armies near Sarhind defeated him. The Mughal *wazir*, Qamar-ud-din Khan died in the battle but his son Muin ul Mulk (Mir Mannu) proved to be an able commander. The credit for victory against Abdali was given to Mir Mannu, and he was made the governor of Lahore. But Abdali was successful in 1752 when he obliged the Mughal emperor to cede to him the provinces of Kashmir, Lahore, Multan and the *sarkar* of Sarhind.¹¹ Mir Mannu was re-appointed as the governor of Lahore by Abdali. He tried the alternative policies of repression and conciliation against the Sikhs but failed. His failure and the rising number of Sikhs were embodied in a popular saying:

*Mannu asan di datri, asan Mannu de soy,
Jeon jeon Mannu wadhda, asin dun swai hoyey.*¹²

(Mir Mannu is the sickle and we are the grass. The more he moves
us down, the more numerous we grow).

The Sikh volunteers arranged themselves in a regular organization called *misls* or *jathas* (groups).¹³ All the Sikh *jathas* were leagued together in the twelve *misls*,

⁸ Nazabat, *Var Nadir Shah*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), *Punjabi Varan*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1951, 24; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 13.

⁹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 54; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh Maharaja of the Punjab (1780-1839)*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, 18.

¹⁰ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 3-4; Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 215-218.

¹¹ J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Polity, Economy and Society*, 4.

¹² Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 140; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 15.

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each with distinguishing title and banner but varying in strength. These *misls* were Sukarchakia, Ahluwalia, Phulkian, Nakai, Kanhiya, Ramgarhia, Bhangi, Faisalpuria or Singhpuria, Nishanwalia, Karor Singhia, Dallewalia and Shaheed.¹⁴ The institutions of *gurmata* and *dal khalsa* were the outcome of this historical situation.¹⁵

A more significant aspect of the situation around 1750s was that the Sikhs were gaining greater and greater confidence and power and were exercising influence over substantial chunks of territory. Some individual Sikh leaders had begun to occupy pockets of territories in different parts of the Lahore province. Jai Singh Kanhiya, for instance, started issuing orders to local officials in 1750. Within six weeks of Mir Mannu's re-appointment as the Governor of Lahore, a Sikh named Hakumat Singh was issuing orders in his own name to the *amils* of the *pargana* of Kahnuwan in the upper Bari *doab*.¹⁶

The occupation of territories by the Sikhs was a clear evidence of enormous increase in their number. The new members came almost exclusively from the countryside and largely from amongst the Jat peasantry. The ties of kinship and clans provided the source of cohesion for small bands, and the bonds of faith provided a sense of solidarity to the entire body of the Sikhs. To meet the practical demands of the historical situation, the Sikhs evolved some of their characteristic arrangements which served as the instruments of their territorial power. They undertook to provide protection (*rakhi*) to the villages against all outsiders, in return for a share of the produce which was generally much less than the revenues paid to the Mughal government.¹⁷ Conciliation of peasantry, in fact, appears to have been the major

¹³ *Misl*- is a term which originated in 18th century history of the Sikhs to describe a unite or brigade of the Sikh warriors. W.H. Mcleod, *Dictionary of Sikhism*, Scarecrow Press, London, 1995, 140-141; Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, Vol. III, 93.

¹⁴ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, (ed.) Joginder Kaur, Patiala, 1980, 2; Jagjiwan Singh Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court (1799-1849)*, Master Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, 6-7.

¹⁵ *Gurmata*- during the 18th century the dispersed forces of the Khalsa developed the practice of representatives of the various *misls* meeting together before Akal Takhat in Amritsar. When a decision was made by an assembly of the Sarbat Khalsa it was regarded as a *gurmata*. *Dal Khalsa*- during the 18th century the fighting Khalsa was divided in *jathas*, most of which later formed *misls*. W.H. Mcleod, *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, University Press, Oxford, 1995, 174; W.H. Mcleod, *Dictionary of Sikhism*, 64,94.

¹⁶ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 90; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 15.

¹⁷ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Centenary Memorial*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 63; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 15.

consideration behind this strategy which also served as a prelude to territorial occupation. The system became more and more popular as the Sikhs became more and more effective. Because the cultivators had to pay a much smaller part of their produce and were safe at least against those who might demand revenue from them. The system thus became an important instrument to establish political control over a large part of the province of Lahore.¹⁸

Mir Mannu could not continue to commit atrocities and tyrannies on the Sikhs for longer period of time because on 3rd November, 1753 he died, leaving the Punjab in a state of lawlessness. Now there was no governor like Zakariya Khan or Mir Mannu and none had the capacity to check the rising power of the Sikhs. The number of Sikh Sardars was rapidly increasing. Mughalani Begum, widow of Mir Mannu, proclaimed her infant son as successor in the viceroyalty and succeeded in establishing an administration in his name. Her hold on Lahore government was weakened partly by the Mughal nobles and partly by the Sikhs. In 1754, for instance, her nominee, Khwaja Mirza Khan had fought number of times with the Sikhs for establishing his own hold over Eminabad, and Qasim Khan, who was appointed to the *pargana* of Patti, was not allowed by the Sikhs even to join his post.¹⁹ At the beginning of 1755, Hakumat Singh was again in occupation of the *pargana* of Kahnuwan.²⁰

Towards the end of 1757, the Afghan general Jahan Khan, who was appointed by Ahmad Shah Abdali to assist his son Taimur Shah in the administration of the province, was nearly overpowered by the Sikhs.²¹ The Sikhs ousted its Afghan *faujdar* Sa'adat Khan Afridi from Jalandhar early in 1758. Henceforth, in whichever direction an Afghan army was sent it came back defeated. The Sikhs even attacked Lahore and plundered its suburbs.²²

¹⁸ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 93; Radha Rani, *Peasantry Under Sikh Rule 1765-1849*, Ph.d Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1988, 15.

¹⁹ J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 91; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 123.

²⁰ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 16.

²¹ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 12; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, A Mukherjee and Co., Calcutta, 1968, 21; J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 6.

²² J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 91; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 16.

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At this stage, Maratha army appeared in the Punjab, who was acting nominally on behalf of the Mughal emperor and influential in northern India. They had come with the idea that they would replace the Mughals from the Punjab.²³ In 1758 they ousted Taimur Shah and also tried to rule the Punjab through non-Maratha governors. A year later the Marathas retreated before the army of Abdali and a historical battle was fought at the place of Panipat on 14th January, 1761, in which Marathas were defeated. This battle was a turning point in the history and finally eliminated Marathas from the politics of the province of Lahore.²⁴

The struggle between the Afghans and the Marathas proved a golden opportunity to the Sikhs who had meanwhile added to their strength and resources. It could be said that the battle of Panipat which was fought between the Marathas and the Afghans was really won by the Sikhs.²⁵ They started ousting the Afghan nominees of Ahmad Shah Abdali and occupying territories for themselves in different parts of the province of Lahore. They brought the entire land from the Sutlej to the Indus under their control.²⁶ Finding all his governors dislodged by the Sikhs, Abdali once again came to Punjab to crush the increasing influence of the Sikhs. Abdali in irritation against the Sikhs for the trouble they had given to him, ordered Zain Khan (Governor of Sarhind) to attack the Sikhs. Zain Khan, according to Abdali's instructions attacked and killed more than 5,000 Sikhs. The fight took place near the village Kup near Malerkotla. The Sikhs could not beat a successful retreat and suffered a crushing defeat. In Sikh tradition this event is remembered as *wadda ghallughara* or the great carnage.²⁷ But the Sikhs in spite of this destruction successfully tried to organize their force and fought against Abdali in the battle of Amritsar in August 1762. The battle remained indecisive and Abdali forced to draw off his army and retire with precipitation to Lahore. During his march back to Kabul in December, he was closely pursued by the Sikhs.²⁸

²³ Joginder Kaur, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, 2; J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Polity, Economy and Society*, 5.

²⁴ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 16; J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 91.

²⁵ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 151.

²⁶ N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikhs Power*, 34-35; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 17.

²⁷ J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 91; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 35.

²⁸ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 155-156; H.S. Bhatia (ed.), *Rare Documents on Sikhs and Their Rule in the Punjab*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1992, 27.

After his return to Kabul his *faujdar*s were dislodged by the Sikhs at different places. Before the beginning of 1765, Abdali felt obliged to come personally to deal with the Sikhs.²⁹ During this invasion, his authority was restricted to his camp and he was on the defensive. In the year 1765, his return from the Punjab marked actually the formal declaration of Sikh sovereignty. Within a few weeks of his departure, the Sikh Sardars Gujjar Singh Bhangi, Lehna Singh Bhangi and Sobha Singh Kanhiya turned out his nominee from Lahore and occupied the city and partitioned it among themselves.³⁰ The southern part of Lahore as far as Niazbeg, 13 kms from the city on the banks of the Ravi, including Mozang, Kot Abdullah Shah, Ichhra and Chauburji fell to the share of Shoba Singh. Gujjar Singh occupied the eastern part of the city from Kabuli Mal's mansion to the Shalimar garden. Lehna Singh obtained the central part of the city including the fort with the Roshnai, Kashmiri, Khizri and Masti gate.³¹ No sooner did Charat Singh Sukarchakia hear of the fall of Lahore than he came to city and secured the famous *zamzama* gun as his share of the booty.³² A coin was struck at Lahore to proclaim the sovereign status of the Sikhs. Sikh rule was re-established and it had come to stay.³³

On assuming the sovereignty they remained undisputed masters of the Punjab and occupied it as a permanent inheritance. Every Sardar, according to his strength, seizing what fell in his way and acknowledging no superior, nor submitting to the control of anybody, nor to any constituted authority whatsoever. They allowed the members of their *misl* to appropriate as many villages and towns as they could easily manage under their authority and this work was so hurriedly done that the territories of the Sikhs in late 1770s included whole of the former Mughal province of Lahore,

²⁹ J.S.Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh Polity, Economy and Society*, 6-7; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 19; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of Sikh Power*, 39.

³⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs Historical and Biographical Notes of the Principal Families in the Territories Under the Punjab Government*, Lahore, 1865, 386, 393, 394; J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand and Co, Delhi, 1966, 20; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 228, 229.

³¹ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1, 161; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 45.

³² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol II, 229.

³³ Joginder Kaur, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, 2; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 19; N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 55.

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three fourth of the province of Multan and one third of the province of Shahjahanabad.³⁴

The Sikhs rose from amongst the common people, setting aside the politico-administrative framework of the Mughal empire and setting themselves up against all its supporters. Their greatest assets were the arrangements they evolved on the basis of their common sense, the ties of kinship and, above all, their religious faith and doctrines which served as the motivating force and the ground for their military and political action.³⁵ Some of the prominent Sikh Sardars had established themselves in the province of Lahore. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for instance, occupied territories in the Jalandhar and Bari *doabs* and also across the Sutlej, with his headquarter at Kapurthala. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia too had his possessions in these two *doabs*, generally residing at Sri Hargobindpur in the upper Bari *doab*. Jai Singh Kanhiya occupied territories in upper Bari *doab*, particularly around Batala. Hari Singh Bhangi and his sons occupied Amritsar and the surrounding area. Gujar Singh Bhangi had a share in Lahore and occupied Gujrat and some other *parganas* in the upper Chaj *doab*. Charat Singh Sukerchakia came into possession of several *parganas* in Rachna, Chaj and Sind Sagar *doabs* with his capital at Gujranwala.³⁶ In the middle rung were the chiefs like Buddha Singh in the Jalandhar *doab*, Haqiqat Singh in the Bari *doab*, Sahib Singh Sialkotia in the Rachna *doab* and Milkha Singh Thehpuria in the Sind Sagar *doab*. In the Mughal province of Delhi there were numbers of Sikh chiefs including the chief of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Ambala, Shahabad, Thanesar, Kaithal, Jagadhari and Buriya.³⁷ The Punjab thus divided into score of independent principalities, and majority of them were under Sikh Sardars. And they were trying to assert their superiority over others either individually or in alliance with others.

The end of eighteenth century was characterized more by internal strife than expansion. The important chiefs like Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charat Singh Sukarchakia, Gujjar Singh, Jai Singh Kanhiya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia asserted

³⁴ J.S.Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh Polity, Economy and Society*, 9; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 20.

³⁵ J.S.Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 92.

³⁶ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 20; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 231-35.

³⁷ J.S.Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 94; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 21-22.

their suzerain claim over some of the hill principalities.³⁸ Already in the 1770s the Sikh chiefs could range on opposite sides in alliance with non-Sikh chiefs. They were fighting among themselves for supremacy. In 1770, Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanhiya supported Brij Raj against his father, Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu, who had secured assistance from Jhanda Singh Bhangi. During this conflict both Charat Singh and Jhanda Singh died. Soon afterwards, the Kanhiyas and the Bhangis fought over Pathankot. In 1776, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was dislodged from his territories by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jai Singh Kanhiya.³⁹

In 1782, the Bhangis and the Kanhiyas clashed once more over the affairs of Jammu. Ranjit Deo was succeeded by his son Brij Raj. The Kanhiyas and Bhangis taking advantage of this position occupied some of the territories of Jammu. The Bhangis seized Karianwala in Sialkot district. Brij Raj was anxious to recover it. He made an appeal to Mahan Singh Sukarchakia for help. Mahan Singh first helped Brij Raj and then himself by looting the town. The Bhangis and Kanhiyas patched up their differences and turned against Brij Raj. Mahan Singh marched to Jammu but powerful combination of his enemies (Bhangis and Kanhiyas) compelled Brij Raj to pay tribute to the victorious Kanhiya and thus the Sukarchakia chief could not be of any help to Brij Raj.⁴⁰ About six months later Mahan Singh again got a chance to go to Jammu, this time not in support of Brij Raj but against him, because he refused to pay the stipulated tribute to the Kanhiyas who invited Mahan Singh to join them in their invasion to Jammu. Haqiqat Singh and Mahan Singh had made a pact to attack and plunder Jammu jointly but Mahan Singh did it alone. He came back with a heavy baggage of booty from Jammu.⁴¹ Around 1785, Mahan Singh joined hands with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia to defeat his erstwhile ally, Jai Singh Kanhiya, in a battle near Batala. In this fight Gurbakhsh Singh, the eldest son of Jai Singh was killed.⁴² Around

³⁸ J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 94.

³⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut –Tawarikh* (tr. Amarwant Singh, ed. J.S.Grewal and Indu Banga), Daftar II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 13; H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 31; Radha Sharma, “Rise of the Sukarchakia Misl”, *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2003-04, 3.

⁴⁰ Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, S Chand and Co; Delhi, 1957, 156; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1964, 342.

⁴¹ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 34; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 156-57.

⁴² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 22; Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court 1799-1849*, Master Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, 8.

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1790, Mahan Singh was trying to wrest some of the territories of Sahib Singh Bhangi. Mahan Singh died in 1791, and the issue of ascendancy between the houses of Gujjar Singh Bhangi and Charat Singh Sukarchakia was still unresolved.⁴³

After Mahan Singh's death it was left for his son and successor Ranjit Singh to settle the issue of supremacy and to unite numerous principalities into a single whole. The legacy of the late 18th century was nevertheless relevant for Ranjit Singh's success. A large, almost contiguous and well administered territory from the middle Rachna to the middle Chaj and middle Sind Sagar *doab*, was the most valuable asset which Ranjit Singh inherited from his father, yielding about a million rupees a year. He also came into the command of 5,000 well mounted and well armed cavalry. Ranjit Singh was an ambitious man who knew no bounds. There were also a number of scattered vassals who were to pay annual tribute.⁴⁴ Ranjit Singh based on these acquired assets and his own capability, rose to be the Maharaja of the kingdom at Lahore which was one of the most powerful kingdom in India in the early 19th century.

Ranjit Singh was born in 13th November, 1780 at Gujranwala, the only child of Sardar Mahan Singh and Raj Kaur.⁴⁵ The newborn was a fifth generation Sikh and third generation ruler. Right from the beginning Ranjit Singh had displayed a spirit of bravery and adventure. He had his first experience of a military campaign when he was just ten. Mahan Singh had demanded tribute from Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat, and on the latter's refusal to comply, ejected him from his principality. Sahib Singh took refuge in the fort of Sohdera. Mahan Singh took Ranjit Singh with him to Sohdera and laid siege to the fort. During the siege Mahan Singh was taken seriously ill and was forced to return to Gujranwala, leaving ten year old Ranjit in command. Ranjit Singh had raised the siege and ambushed Bhangi force near Sohdera. It was considered as first victory of Ranjit Singh.⁴⁶

⁴³ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 22.

⁴⁴ J.S Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 3; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 22.

⁴⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 16; Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i- Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, 6; Prem Singh Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1918, 24.

⁴⁶ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 37; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 24; Radha Sharma, "Rise of the Sukarchakia Misl", 13.

As the only son of Mahan Singh, Ranjit Singh was immediately recognized by all concerned as the obvious ruler of Sukarchakia *misl*. Ranjit Singh was too young and temperamental to bother about the day to day management of the *misl*. So the affair of *misl* was managed by his mother (Raj Kaur), who was assisted by Mahan Singh's two trusted officers, Diwan Lakhpat Rai and Misr Laiq Ram. Raj Kaur had confidence in Lakhpat Rai's integrity. But her brother Dal Singh, who wished to take the administration into his own hands, supported his nephew, Jodh Singh. Very soon finding himself in a weak position Dal Singh agreed to accept his position of subordinate to Diwan Lakhpat Rai.⁴⁷

In 1795, Ranjit Singh was married to Mahtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur and Jai Singh Kanhiya. This personal event of his life cemented political alliance between two ruling houses. This alliance could be utilized to safeguard and even advance the interests of both *misls*.⁴⁸ Sada Kaur was the first to ask for help. Her possessions were threatened by the Ramgarhias and Ranjit Singh had besieged Ramgarhia fortress to relieve the pressure on the Kanhiyas. Now Ranjit Singh's mind was completely obsessed with visions of power. He realized that Kanhiyas were not as stronger as he had believed.⁴⁹ And his chances would be brighter if he could draw some other *misl* on his side. He adopted a threefold policy towards Sikh *misls*. The weaker must go to the wall without any compunction. With some of the stronger ones he made matrimonial alliance, friendship agreement and demanded territory, money in dowry, and put an end to them in due course. He forged another matrimonial alliance in 1798 with the daughter of the Nakai Sardar, Qamar Singh. Another ruling house now became his staunch supporter.⁵⁰

While Ranjit Singh was sorting out his matrimonial affairs, the management of the Sukarchakia *misl* reached at critical stage due to friction between Lakhpat Rai and Dal Singh. Lakhpat Rai was murdered while collecting revenue. Ranjit Singh felt that the time had come to free himself from his many advisers, and take the administration

⁴⁷ S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 346; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 24.

⁴⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 29; J.S.Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24; N.K. Sinha *Ranjit Singh*, 15.

⁴⁹ Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 26.

⁵⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 32; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 26; Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court*, 15.

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of his *misl* into his own hands. At the age of seventeen, Ranjit Singh became the real master of Sukarchakia inheritance.⁵¹

At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power, the Punjab was divided into a number of petty principalities and some of the leaders were not on happy terms with one another. The people of province were generally devoid of a sense of unity. The Sikh confederacies had already been weakened. The Afghans under Shah Zaman were again threatening to establish their over lordship in the Punjab. The British had also started to take interest in the Punjab as their future sphere of influence. Besides, there were some Pathan possessions, adjoining hill states under the Hindu Rajas and several small and petty principalities that dotted the map of the Punjab.⁵² In the words of Khushwant Singh, "In the 1790's the Punjab looked like a jag-saw puzzle consisting in fourteen pieces with five arrows piercing it from the sides. Twelve of these fourteen pieces were the Sikh *misls*, and the other two, the Pathans controlled district of Qasur in the neighborhood of Lahore and Hansi in the south-east under the English adventurer George Thomas. The five arrows were the Afghans in the north west, the Rajputs of Kangra in the north, the Gurkhas in the north east, the British in the east and the Marathas in the south east".⁵³ Anarchy and political upheaval always hold out an opportunity to men of genius. Young Ranjit Singh got the golden opportunity and in 1799, a process of unification was started virtually to establish an empire during the first quarter of the 19th century.

In the summer of 1799, Ranjit Singh's desire to become the master of Lahore was gratified. The occupation of Lahore marked a watershed in his career and in the history of Sikh rule in the Punjab. Shah Zaman, grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, had invaded the Punjab twice before and each of his invasion had brought out the best in the young Sukarchakia Sardar. After his first invasion, Ranjit Singh had recovered his own fort of Rohtas. During the second, he emerged as a leading Sikh chief, and during the third invasion he opposed Shah Zaman as the leader of a number of Sikh chiefs. Shortly after Shah Zaman's defeat, the leading citizens of Lahore sent a secret invitation to Ranjit Singh to come and take over the city. They were not satisfied with

⁵¹ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 38; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 26-27.

⁵² Radha Sharma, "Rise of Sukarchakia Misl", 15.

⁵³ Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 28.

the rule of Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh who spent their time in drink and fornication.⁵⁴ Ranjit Singh accepted the offer, laid siege and on July 7th, 1799, conquered the citadel and occupied the city with the willing co-operation of some of its leading Hindu and Muslim residents as with the assistance of his allies, particularly his mother-in-law Sada Kaur.⁵⁵ The victory of Lahore was consequently of the greatest significance to Ranjit Singh. The possession of city made him much the most powerful chieftain in northern India and since it was known to have always been the capital of the province.⁵⁶

With the conquest of Lahore, Ranjit Singh was fairly well launched on a career of systematic aggrandizement which made him the master of an empire in less than a quarter of a century. His power was growing day by day. Ranjit Singh in fact, approved of the epithet *sarkar-i-wala* (His Exalted Majesty) for himself⁵⁷ and issues the coins in the names of Gurus:

*Deg-o-teg-o-fateh nusrat be darang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*⁵⁸

In 1802, Ranjit Singh decided to forge an alliance with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia in order to increase his power, and eventually, to eliminate his old rival Sardars known as the Bhangis. Fateh Singh's interest in joining Ranjit Singh was to elevate himself equal to the Maharaja of the Lahore, to subdue his enemies with combined forces to recover some of his lost territories and perhaps to gain some new ones out of those won by his turbaned brother.⁵⁹ At Tarn Taran, the two rulers exchanged turbans to become brother bound in honour. In the presence of the Granth Sahib they also pledged to regard each other's enemy as an enemy, and to come to the other's help at their own expenses.⁶⁰ In the first decade of his career Ranjit Singh subverted more than twenty principalities in the plains. Before the occupation of Amritsar in 1805, which put an end to the dominions carved out by the redoubtable Hari Singh Bhangi,

⁵⁴ J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 28; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 37.

⁵⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 37; J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 100-01.

⁵⁶ Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 40.

⁵⁷ Indu Baga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 37.

⁵⁸ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 4.

⁵⁹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 40.

⁶⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 42; Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court*, 20.

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Ranjit Singh annexed the territories of Jassa Singh Dulu and Dal Singh Gill of the Rachna *doab* and of Jodh Singh Bajwa in the Chaj *doab*.⁶¹

The landmark of his career was the capture of Amritsar in 1805. Ranjit Singh was keen to unite the political capital Lahore with Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs. The leading citizens like Arur Mal and Sheikh Kamaluddin invited Ranjit Singh to take over the fort and the territories of *mai* Sukhan, the widow of the Bhangi Sardar Gulab Singh and their minor son Gurdit Singh. Ranjit Singh demanded from *mai* Sukhan *zamzama* gun, over which he also had some claim. In 1805, joined forces of Ranjit Singh with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Sada Kaur attacked Amritsar and occupied it from the hold of *mai* Sukhan. The fort of Govindgarh was a valuable acquisition. With it he occupied five big cannons including Abdali's massive *zamzama*. Ranjit Singh was given a tumultuous reception in the holy city. The occupation of Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs, brought additional luster to Ranjit Singh's name. He became the *de-facto* Maharaja in all the five *doabs* of the Punjab.⁶²

Within the five years following, the conquest of Amritsar, Ranjit Singh took over Rahon and Nakodar in the Jalandhar *doab* on the death of Tara Singh Dallewalia, Phillaur from its Kang chief and Hariana in Hoshiarpur from the widow of Baghel Singh. In the Bari *doab* he took over Pathankot from Tara Singh Sandhu, Sujanpur from Buddh Singh Bagga, Adinanagar from Gulab Singh Khaira, Chamiani from its Randhawa chief, Qasur from Afghans, Maruf from Buddh Singh and Hujra Shah Muqim from its Sayyid chief. In the Rachna *doab* he took over Pindi Bhattian from the Bhattis and Kamalia from the Kharals. In the Sind Sagar *doab*, the territories of Nawab Khan Jodhra around Pindi Gheb and of Muhammad Khan Gheba around Fateh Jang were annexed. In the cis-Sutluj campaigns Ranjit Singh plundered one chief to bribe another. In his first cis-Sutluj expedition he occupied the estate, which consisting of number of villages of two widows, Nur-ul Nisa and Lachhmi, of Rae Ilyas Khan of Raekot. They were given two villages for their maintenance.⁶³ During his second expedition large number of area was sieged. He distributed all his territory

⁶¹ J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 101.

⁶² B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, V.V.R.I., Hoshiarpur, 1977, 45; J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 33.

⁶³ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 84.

to some chiefs for a certain amount of annual tribute in order to establish his supremacy over them. Thus, before Ranjit Singh signed the treaty of Amritsar with the British in 1809, he was ruling over large areas in all the five *doabs* of the Punjab.⁶⁴

The treaty of Amritsar was concluded in April 25th, 1809. Under this treaty the boundaries between the dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and British were defined. The Sutlej was to be the boundary for Ranjit Singh's domains. In return, perpetual friendship and the most favoured nation treatment were ensured for Ranjit Singh. He was now virtually recognized as the sole sovereign on his side of the river Sutlej.⁶⁵ The treaty of Amritsar was a grievous blow to Ranjit Singh's dream of a unified Punjab. He was keen to unite all the Sikh states in the cis-Satluj region with his kingdom. This treaty provided him opportunity to conquer new areas in the former Mughal province of Lahore, to oust the Afghans from Multan and Kashmir and finally, to turn the tables against the successors of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the former Mughal province of Kabul.⁶⁶

During the second decade of the 19th century, Ranjit Singh further extended the area under his direct control by subduing a number of chiefs. The Sikh chiefs ousted now were those of Jalandhar, Hajipur and Mukerian in the Bist Jalandhar *doab*, Jaimal Singh of Fatehgarh Churian, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia of Sri Hargobindpur and the Nakai chiefs in the Bari *doab*, the chiefs of Wazirabad, Hallowal and Doda in the Rachna *doab* and Jiwan Singh of Rawalpindi in the Sindh Sagar *doab*. Batala was taken over from Sada Kaur. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala was the only Sikh chief left in the Punjab whose territory was not taken over. The Rajput chiefs of Jammu and Kangra, Khari Khari, Akhnur, Bhimber, Lakhanpur, Nurpur, Guler, Siba, Kotla, Jaswan and Datarpur also lost their territories in the hands of Ranjit Singh. All these states were close to the plains. Attock was wrested from the Afghans; the Awan, Gakkhar and Tiwana chiefs were shorn of their possessions in the Sindh

⁶⁴ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 101.

⁶⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 75; J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, Appendix, 25, 352; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 85-86.

⁶⁶ J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 101.

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Sagar *doab*. The Baloch chiefs of Khushab and Sahiwal in the Chaj *doab* and the Sial chiefs of Jhang in the Rachna *doab* lost their territories to Ranjit Singh before 1818.⁶⁷

In less than four years Ranjit Singh liquidated all the Afghan strongholds on the east of the river Indus. Multan fell finally in June 1818, Nawab Muzaffar Khan, his two sons and a nephew were killed while fighting. The fort of Multan was capitulated on June 2nd, 1818. The conquest ended Afghan influence in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh's administration was established in the core areas of the Mughal province of Multan.⁶⁸ Many hill principalities were subverted and others were brought under his political control. Some of the important chieftains who accept his overlordship were Chamba, Mandi, Kulu, Jammu and Rajauri and those subjugated by him included, among others, Kangra, Bhimbar and Punchh.⁶⁹

Ranjit Singh extended the Sikh dominions far beyond the limits dreamt of by his 18th century predecessors. The Afghan province of Kashmir was conquered in 1819. The conquest of Kashmir extended the frontiers of the state to the borders of China and Tibet.⁷⁰ Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan were occupied in 1820.⁷¹ The chief of Mankera surrendered his capital in 1821 and all his territory in the Sind Sagar *doab* was taken over.⁷² Then for ten years Ranjit Singh did not add much to the directly administered areas. He remained content with realizing tribute. In 1831, he took over Dera Ghazi Khan from the chief of Bahawalpur to whom it had been entrusted ten years earlier.⁷³ Peshawar was taken over from its Afghan governor, Yar Muhammad in 1834 though he had been sending revenue and tribute since 1824.⁷⁴ In 1836, the territories of Bannu, Kohat and Dera Ghazi Khan were taken over from the subordinate chiefs and made an integral part of the directly administered dominions of

⁶⁷ J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 101-103; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 22-26; Radha Rani, *Peasantry Under Sikh Rule*, Ph.D Thesis, 35-39.

⁶⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 252; Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, 85; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh -i-Punjab* (tr. Jit Singh Sital), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, 251.

⁶⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 163, 164, 197, 223; G.L Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 10-13 ; Reeta Grewal, *Polity, Economy and Urbanization: Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1981, 43.

⁷⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 303; P.S. Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 114; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 16.

⁷¹ J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 141, 143; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 59, 60, 61; *Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan, 1883-1884*, 20.

⁷² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 343; Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, 130.

⁷³ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 26.

⁷⁴ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, 291; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 130; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1964, 431.

Ranjit Singh. By 1837, he had constructed a strong fortress of Jamrud on the mouth of Khaibar. Before his death in 1839, Ranjit Singh's authority over all the conquered and subordinated territories between the river Sutlej and the mountain ranges of Ladakh, Karakoram, Hindukush and Sulaiman was well recognized.

The forty years of Maharaja Ranjit Singh rule was crowned with victories. He created a big kingdom despite the opposition and hostile attitude of the Marathas, the British, the Afghans and the Sikh chiefs of the various *misl*s of the Punjab. He was a great conqueror who got liberated permanently the north-west frontier of the Punjab from the control of Afghanistan. But the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 ushered in a period of great political instability for the state. In less than seven years time from 1839 to 1845, there were several changes in government. Both internal and external factors were responsible for this sorry state of affairs. Internally, the state was weakened by conspiracies arising from two rival groups (Sandhanwalias and Dogras) in the governing class and the inability of the rulers to control their intrigues and counter-intrigues. Externally, the threats came from the British. Even before the death of the Maharaja the British had started estimating the economic potentials of the kingdom of the Lahore. They had a fair assessment of the conditions of the Punjab under the possible successors of the Maharaja. They were absolutely sure that none of the contenders for the throne of the Punjab matched the caliber of Ranjit Singh. The state was plunged into a most critical situation.⁷⁵ The six years which followed (1839-1845) were a period of storm and anarchy in which assassination was the rule and the weak were ruthlessly trampled under foot. The death of Ranjit Singh was, in fact, followed by a rapid succession of crimes and tragedies.⁷⁶

After the death of Ranjit Singh his throne become an object of contention between two rival candidates Sher Singh whose legitimacy was questioned, and Kharak Singh, who was his eldest son, but was imbecile. But the Maharaja before his death, held meeting where he appointed Kharak Singh as his successor and ordered Raja Dhain Singh to continued as prime minister.⁷⁷ But no one could match him in

⁷⁵ Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, Master Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, 20; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab (1839-45)*, V.V.R.I, Hoshiarpur, 1960, 8, 10.

⁷⁶ Major Hugh Pearse, *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 211.

⁷⁷ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, 238, 348; H.R. Gupta, *Punjab on the Eve of First Anglo Sikh War*, 27.

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caliber and shrewdness. The immediate successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was Kharak Singh. Raja Dhian Singh became prime minister. Kharak Singh strictly enjoined upon all his courtiers to route every representation through Dhian Singh. Kharak Singh appointed Chet Singh as his adviser on political affairs, who wanted to become an independent minister, and had planned to remove Dhian Singh.⁷⁸ Dhian Singh and Chet Singh each plotted for the other's downfall. Kharak Singh was put in custody and Chet Singh was assassinated on 8th October, 1839. From this onwards Kharak Singh was deprived of all his administrative powers, and all authorities passed into the hands of *kanwar* Nau Nihal Singh.⁷⁹ He became *de facto* ruler and Dhian Singh continued to as prime minister. For a little over a year, their administration was successful. Unfortunately Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh died on the same day that is 9th November 1840.⁸⁰ The death of Nau Nihal Singh precipitated a crisis which was the first of the series of internal commotions that weakened the kingdom so ably built by Ranjit Singh.

After the death of Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh, Sher Singh was the next claimant to the throne, and on 9th November, 1840, his succession was formally proclaimed,⁸¹ but then Nau Nihal Singh's unborn child's claim was announced by Chand Kaur, mother of Nau Nihal Singh and after a tussle, on 27th November, she became regent.⁸² Raja Dhian Singh became her adviser but only in addition to Sardar Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia. The administration of the state under Chand Kaur suffered an immense setback. Raja Dhian Singh discovered very soon that he could not have his way. His opponents were supported by the Maharani who listened to the Sandhanwalias more than to him. To obviate her eclipse at the court, Dhian Singh incited the already eager Sher Singh to make a fresh bid for power, telling some of the army commanders to support him.⁸³

⁷⁸ Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, 45; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs* (tr.), Punjab Languages Department, Punjab, 1970, 77.

⁷⁹ Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 26; Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1967, 16.

⁸⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 126; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 92.

⁸¹ S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 30; Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 30.

⁸² J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 120; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 195.

⁸³ W.L.M' Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 8; J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 120.

Maharani Chand Kaur was dethroned and on 20th January, 1841 Sher Singh was installed as the Maharaja, but state of lawlessness continued for at least six months.⁸⁴ All the chiefs excepting the Sandhanwalias made their obeisance to him. The Sandhanwalias were afraid of being penalized because of their opposition to Sher Singh. Maharaja Sher Singh's rule began badly and had difficulties from the rank and file of the army. The Khalsa soldiery became furious and uncontrollable. In order to seek their support the Maharaja had promised to raise their salaries. But there was not enough of money in the treasury to satisfy the soldiery. He was unable to redeem his promise to the army. The Maharaja and Dhian Singh had to make strenuous efforts to bring about normalcy. Maharaja Sher Singh pardoned Sardar Attar Singh and Ajit Singh Sandhawalia and allowed them to return to Lahore. Lehna Singh and Kehar Singh were released. They were all reinstated in their *jagirs*.⁸⁵ After regaining the Maharaja's confidence and trust, Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh murdered him and his son, prince Partap Singh, on 15th September, 1843. Sher Singh's reign ended, as it had begun. Raja Dhian Singh was also murdered by them.⁸⁶ The news of the assassination of Dhian Singh was received by Suchet Singh and Hira Singh, who were then camping a couple of miles away outside the city (Lahore). They immediately appealed to the Khalsa army to avenge the murders.⁸⁷

The intention of the Sandhawalia Sardars was to install the boy Dalip Singh, with his mother Maharani Jindan as the regent to perpetuate their indirect control over the affairs of the state. Raja Hira Singh was able to win the support of the army against them. About a thousand men, including Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh, were killed in action when Hira Singh occupied the fort.⁸⁸ Dalip Singh was proclaimed Maharaja with Hira Singh as his prime minister. Hira Singh's elevation was not liked by his uncle Suchet Singh.⁸⁹ Hira Singh's persistent harassment of princes Kashmira Singh and Pashaura Singh aroused strong feelings against him. In fact he tried to eliminate Pashaura Singh and Kashmira Singh with the help of Raja Gulab Singh. The grimness of the whole situation comes out clearly from the fact that when Raja Suchet

⁸⁴ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 150-152; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 138.

⁸⁵ J.S. Grewal, *Rise of the Sikhs*, 12; Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 33, 34.

⁸⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 279-280; M.C. Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 75, 77.

⁸⁷ S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 67.

⁸⁸ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 255; S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 69.

⁸⁹ Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 41.

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Singh made a bid for the office of the *wazir* against his nephew Hira Singh, the nephew had no hesitation in eliminating the uncle.⁹⁰ Hira Singh's tutor *pandit* Jalla emerged as a centre of power and on his advice Suchet Singh was murdered.⁹¹ Jalla overreached himself when he attacked the character of Maharani Jindan who appealed to the army *panches* to protect her honour from Jalla-Hira Singh alliance. The army rose up, pursued the fleeing Jalla and Hira Singh and on December 21st, 1844, killed both of them.⁹²

Gradually Maharani Jindan took the functions of the court in her hands. Jawahar Singh, her brother, held the office of prime minister and on his orders Peshaura Singh was murdered.⁹³ After the murder of Peshaura Singh, Jawahar Singh was declared a traitor by the army. On September 21st, 1845, Jawahar Singh was killed by the Khalsa army for his wrong doings.⁹⁴ The Khalsa would assemble and decide the future composition of the government. The appointment of either Gulab Singh or Tej Singh, as prime minister was considered, and the affairs were left to Maharani, but the final decision always rest with the Khalsa.⁹⁵ Out of three contestants for the office of the prime minister Gulab Singh, Lal Singh and Tej Singh, Lal Singh was appointed the next prime minister and Tej Singh became the commander-in-chief of the Sikh army.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the British continued with their plots and plans. Raja Gulab Singh, Tej Singh and Lal Singh acted as agents of the British government.⁹⁷

Maharani Jindan was instigating army against the British. As the army was already excited and Maharani took advantage of this moment and prompted them to cross the Sutlej and as a result there was first Anglo-Sikh war. The Khalsa forces under the command of Lal Singh and Tej Singh, crossed the Sutlej and entrenched

⁹⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 122.

⁹¹ Hira Singh believed *pandit* to be an infallible astrologer. M.C.Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, 112; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 289-90.

⁹² S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 88; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 342.

⁹³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 362-363; S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 401; Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 132.

⁹⁴ Jawahar Singh's murder became the direct factor of bringing about war with the British. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 366-367; Sir John J.H. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 131.

⁹⁵ S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 97.

⁹⁶ S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 537; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 419.

⁹⁷ Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence Relating to The Anglo Sikh Wars*, 68-69.

themselves in their own territory in the second week of December, 1845. The first Anglo-Sikh war was, all along, marred by treachery, betrayal and infidelity, the force of Khalsa army had faced number of troubles. The first battle was fought near Mudki on December 18th, 1845. The British forces suffered heavy losses. But in the second battle fought near Ferozepur on December 21st, 1845 they could claim a victory. Both Lal Singh and Tej Singh played their premeditated treacherous roles, informing the British officers of the disposition of their armies, not attacking the British critical situations and leaving the field of battle after the commencement of action. The replacement of Lal Singh by Gulab Singh before the battle of Sabraon, fought on 10th February, 1846, was a change for the worse. Tej Singh not only left the battle-field but also destroyed the bridge of boats which could be used for retreat. Thousands lost their lives in this battle, including Sardar Sham Singh Atariwala. Ranjodh Singh Majithia had been defeated in the battle of Aliwal in 28th January, 1846 near Ludhiana after his initial success in the battle of Baddowal in 21st January, 1846.⁹⁸

The Governor-General entered Lahore on February 20th and on March 9th a treaty of peace was concluded between the British and the Lahore Darbar. All territories between the Beas and the Sutlej were annexed. The strength of the Sikh army was reduced. Jammu and Kashmir were taken away from the Sikhs and given to Gulab Singh.⁹⁹ On the third day, March 11th, another agreement was dictated to the Lahore Darbar: the posting of a British unit in Lahore till the end of the year on payment of expenses. Although Maharani Jindan continued to act as regent and Lal Singh as the *wazir*, effective power was vested in the British resident, Henry Lawrence. Dalip Singh remained on the throne.¹⁰⁰ On December 16th, 1846 a new treaty was signed at Bharowal and ratified on December 26th. By the terms of the treaty the British government undertook the maintenance of the administration and the protection of the Maharaja during his minority. The resident was given full authority

⁹⁸ S.S. Thorburn, *The Punjab in Peace and War*, Usha Publication, New Delhi, 1987, 26-43, 44-56, 57-72; B.S. Nijjar, *Anglo Sikh Wars*, K.B Publication, New Delhi, 1976, 6-8; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 539-42, 544-46.

⁹⁹ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 12; S.M. Latif, *History of the Sikhs*, 554; S.S. Bal, *British Policy Towards the Punjab (1844-49)*, New Age Publishers, Calcutta, 1971, 78-81.

¹⁰⁰ S.M. Latif, *History of the Sikhs*, 554; S.S. Bal, *British Policy Towards the Punjab*, 81.

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to direct and control all members in every department of the state. Maharani Jindan was deprived of all powers and pensioned off.¹⁰¹

The new British government faced a rebellion in the Sikh province. The spark set off at Multan. As succession fee 30 lakh rupees were demanded from Governor Mul Raj and the annual revenue of the province was raised. Mul Raj offered to resign in December, 1847. John Lawrence, as the officiating Resident, agreed to accept his resignation but with effect from March, 1848. New Resident, Frederic Currie sent Kahn Singh Maan to take charge of Multan, accompanied by two British officers, Agnew and Anderson. Mul Raj's soldiers rebelled and killed both the English officers. The Multan challenge could have been suppressed by timely action.¹⁰² The Governor General, wanted to use this incident as a pretext and give it the appearance of a general rebellion by the Sikhs and then annex the state of Punjab.¹⁰³ The British further provoked the Sikhs by exiling Maharani Jindan to Banaras. Her annual allowance of one and a half lakh of rupees was reduced to twelve thousand and her jewellery worth fifty thousand rupees was forfeited. From Banaras she escaped to Nepal.¹⁰⁴

Captain James Abbott, who was adviser to Chattar Singh Attariwala, the governor of Hazara, started instigating the Muslim population of the province against the Sikh ruler. Chattar Singh's daughter was engaged to Maharaja Dalip Singh¹⁰⁵ and he requested the resident of Lahore to confirm the date for the royal wedding. The Resident regarded this proposal with disfavour and did not concede the request of Chattar Singh. On the other hand Captain Abbott the British representative at Hazara and a subordinate to Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala excited the local Muslims against the Sardar. When the Muslims attacked Chattar Singh, Canora, an American officer at Hazara, refused to obey the orders of Chattar Singh saying that he would take orders only from Abbott. In the skirmish with the Sikhs, Canora was killed.

¹⁰¹ Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Duleep Singh Correspondence*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1977, 48-50; S.S. Bal, *British Policy towards the Punjab*, 131-132; Varinder Grover (ed.), *The Story of the Punjab, Yesterday and Today*, Vol. 1, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1995, 48.

¹⁰² Sita Ram Kohli, *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj*, Monograph No. 14, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1971, 1-12.

¹⁰³ J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 125; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 558-559; Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, 214.

¹⁰⁴ S.S. Bal, *British Policy Towards the Punjab*, 197; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 564.

¹⁰⁵ S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 158.

Chattar Singh was forced to relinquish the governorship of Hazara and was deprived of his *jagir*.¹⁰⁶ His son Sher Singh joined his father. The situation suited Lord Dalhousie to carry out his designs of annexation of the Punjab. That made Dalhousie on October 5th, 1848 to declare war against the Sikhs. Battles were fought at Ramnagar on November 22nd, 1848, at Chillianwala on January 13, 1849 and at Gujrat on February 21st, 1849.¹⁰⁷

Chattar Singh and Sher Singh were finally defeated. On March 14th, 1849, the Sikh soldiers surrendered at Rawalpindi before Major General Gilbert. Dalhousie proclaimed annexation of the Punjab on March 29th, 1849, and young Dalip Singh affixed his signatures to the fatal document which deprived him of his crown and kingdom. He was reduced from a sovereign ruler to an exile, to be at the mercy of the British government of India and England.¹⁰⁸ The majestic fabric raised by Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a thing of the past.

Establishment of Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab gave stability, peace, progress and prosperity to the society. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the ruler of the masses. Ranjit Singh was wise and shrewd enough to realize that the Khalsa (the theocratic commonwealth) of which each individual Sikh considered himself as a member, was still a potent force. For the unity and coherence of brotherhood he always showed deference to the Khalsa and acted in the name of the Khalsa.¹⁰⁹ He always identified himself with peasants and soldiers. He gave little importance to the crown and the throne. He did not assume the title of the king. He liked to be addressed by the plain and simple title of '*singh sahib*' which applicable to any member of the Sikh gentry. He refused to sit on the Mughal throne at Lahore and preferred to hold Darbar sitting in cross-legged position in one or the other chair which did not have any semblance of royal throne. Sometimes, he held Darbar even in a more informal manner, sitting on a carpet and reclining on a velvet cushion. He referred to his

¹⁰⁶ S.R. Kohli, *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj*, 13; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 565 -566.

¹⁰⁷ Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Duleep Singh Correspondence*, 66-67; S.R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 174-179; B.S. Nijjar, *Anglo Sikh Wars*, 45-47.

¹⁰⁸ J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 127; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab*, 571-572.

¹⁰⁹ Radha Sharma, *Contemporary And Later Perspectives on Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2007, 1.

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government as *khalsaji* or *sarkar khalsa*.¹¹⁰ He was simply dressed in plain silk or pashmina in winter and white muslin in summer. He was firm about wearing his simple chieftain's turban and never adorned himself with any royal emblem on his turban.¹¹¹ These habits of the Maharaja may also be attributed to his hailing from the tribal peasant stock and the impact upon him of the rural culture of the Punjab.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was wise enough to understand that the Sikhs constituted minority in the total population of the Punjab and therefore, it was necessary for him to conciliate the other communities of the region. For this purpose he adopted liberal policies towards all religions and treated them with magnanimity. People of all religions equally reciprocated his warm interest in their religions. Their religious beliefs and practices were fully respected by the state and they had unstinted freedom to carry on their worship in any way they liked. He and his royal court participated in fairs and festivals of all, even those festivals which were strictly religious festivals. Many of their religious leaders' *pandits*, *jogis*, *sheikhs* and *mullas* and their temples, *maths* and mosques were granted revenue free lands. Old grants were confirmed by the Maharaja.¹¹² He did not interfere in the well-established customs, rites and practices of the people. Old traditions and practices were respected and followed. In the words of F.S.Waheeduddin, 'there was complete religious harmony during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh'. All the communities looked upon him not only as their protector but also as one of themselves.¹¹³

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy of recruitment to the state's civil and military services was also marked by the same spirit of magnanimity. In the apportionment of public offices he took special care to see that each community received its due share, not only in the lower but also in the higher ranks, and especially in and around the court. Merit and loyalty rather than regional and communal considerations were the underlying principles of his recruitment policy.¹¹⁴ Many erstwhile rulers and *jagirdars*

¹¹⁰ Faqir Syad Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, 122; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 1.

¹¹¹ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 122; Radha Sharma, *Contemporary And Later Perspectives on Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 2; Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oriental Publishers and Distributor, New Delhi, 1978, 223.

¹¹² Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 164-165; J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 33-34.

¹¹³ F.S.Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 23.

¹¹⁴ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 72.

were assorted into the ruling class. Maharaja Ranjit Singh realized the significance of welding up the individuals of different background and interest into a single whole. By far the majority of the new rulers were Jats.¹¹⁵ A few non-Punjabis and Europeans satisfied the Maharaja on the basis of merit and occupied important positions in the administration as well as in the army. The key posts of his civil and military administration were held by people belonging to various communities and hailing from different parts of the world— Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans and so on.¹¹⁶ Even the people from lower castes in the countryside or professional castes like the *tarkhan*, *kalal*, *nai* and *mazhabi* were also the members of ruling class.¹¹⁷ He not only recruited people from various communities but also inspired full confidence in them so that they served him with loyalty up to the end of his reign. There was not a single example when anyone of them proved disloyal or rebelled against him.¹¹⁸

To bring efficiency in the administration, kingdom was divided into *subas*, *parganas*, *tapas*, *topes* and villages and for each unit suitable officials such as *kardars*, *qanungos*, *patwaris*, *amils*, *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* were appointed.¹¹⁹ *Kardars* and *qanungos* were employed in revenue administration. Their primary duty was to collect the revenue, though they performed various other functions as well. Most of the former *chaudharis* and *muquddams* were allowed to perform their customary works. They were served as a link between the *kardars* and cultivators. In towns and cities too, the representatives of various castes and communities were associated with local administration.¹²⁰

Likewise, Ranjit Singh's other policies, agriculture, trade and industry did not discriminate between one community and another. These policies combined with peaceful and tranquil conditions because of his stable government, gave a boost to

¹¹⁵ Indu Banga, "The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore", *Journal of Regional History*, Vol. II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, 15.

¹¹⁶ Radha Sharma, *Contemporary And Later Perspectives on Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 2; Indu Banga, "Social Mobility in the Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (eds.), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 133.

¹¹⁷ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 33;

¹¹⁸ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 73.

¹¹⁹ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 302; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 82; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 117.

¹²⁰ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 83; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 82.

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agriculture, trade and industry in the state.¹²¹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought to the people of the Punjab the advantages of a uniform administration which are so very necessary for the peaceful cultivation of land. He established peace and security to the extent, which the people had not enjoyed for a century.¹²²

The agrarian policies of the state were favourable to the actual cultivators. Through the working of the land revenue administration the state permeated every aspect of the economic and corporate life of the peasantry. State promoted agricultural production, influenced the existing landed rights and created new ones.¹²³ Preference was given in the most matters to the actual cultivators, non-cultivators proprietors and *jagirdars* enjoyed no more than a nominal title. The policy of state was also responsible for adding a large number of new members to the class of peasant proprietors.¹²⁴ Wherever new villages were founded as part of the extension of cultivation programme, generally it was the landless people or small holders who settled there. However, the largest bulk of the land was still held by the traditional land owning groups. But the pro-peasant policies of state also inducted a number of artisans and menial to take to cultivation of fallow land.¹²⁵ The significant classes for agriculture were the *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *kumhars*, *chamars* and *chuhars* who had been working under the *jajmani* system in rural areas. Agriculture was not only a supplementary source of income for them but also helped them to improve their social status.¹²⁶

The increasing urbanization and growing demand for military goods and luxury articles inducted some of the country artisans, particularly, the *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *julahas* and *sunars* move to towns and cities. The artisans employed in state *karkhanas* had better conditions of service in the form of better salaries and better

¹²¹ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 74.

¹²² Maharaja Ranjit Singh was cautious that the crops were not destroyed during the movement of troops. He also granted remission in land revenue in case of the continuation of his camp in a particular area. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Centenary Memorial*, 118; Radha Sharma, *Peasantry and The State, Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, K.K. Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, 151.

¹²³ Radha Sharma, *Peasantry and The State, Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 144.

¹²⁴ F.S.Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 34.

¹²⁵ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 74.

¹²⁶ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans in The Punjab: A Study of the Social Change in Historical Perspective (1849-1947)*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1996, 29.

chances for promotion. Some of them pleased the Maharaja by their good work and won handsome rewards in cash or in *jagir*.¹²⁷

Liberal policies of state imparted a new vigor to trade, foreign as well as domestic. The organization of trade continued to be conducted as in the past. All categories of traders were benefited but the maximum advantage went to the Khatri and Aroras of the Punjab. Bedis and Sodhis being associated with the families of the Sikh Gurus, were specially favoured by state.¹²⁸

The administration of justice was most important for the acceptance of a ruler's authority by the mass of the people. There were regular courts in the cities and towns, presided over by judicial officers who administered justice under the customary law of the district or the caste. These courts were open to all who wished to be governed by customary law, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. Hindu and Islamic laws were in use and for their interpretation and application judges were appointed from the Hindu and Muslim communities as the case may be.¹²⁹ In the case of Hindus learned *pandit* interpreted *manu smriti*. Special courts were organized for Muslims and *qazis* decide cases in accordance with the laws of *shariat*. *Qazis* were not replaced by Hindu and Sikh *adalatis*. The *qazi's* court had remained operative under Sikh rule. In secular matters, particularly for matters relating to property, the *qazi's* court was open to non-Muslims not merely in theory but in actual practice.¹³⁰ *Nazims, kardars, jagirdars*, ministers and in some cases leading chiefs were also entrusted with judicial powers. In the countryside the judicial work was handled by the *panchayat** who had been in existence for centuries. Maharaja Ranjit Singh not only respected, but also recognized them.¹³¹

The most important instrument for the acquisition of power was of course the army. Ranjit Singh created his kingdom with the help of army. He maintained peace

¹²⁷ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24; Harish C. Sharma, "Artisans in The Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (eds.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, 183.

¹²⁸ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 276.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 381; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 359.

¹³⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 10.

* *Panchayat*: Court of Five.

¹³¹ Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Centenary Memorial*, 118; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 381.

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and order in the kingdom and checked foreign invasion with help of army. Every village supplied a number of soldiers to the Maharaja's army. On account of army demands trade, commerce and industry flourished in the Punjab. Hari Ram Gupta remarked that the standard of living in villages was considerably raised.¹³²

It is significant to observe that even though Persian was court language of the Lahore Darbar, Punjabi emerged as a common medium of speech which tended to bring the diverse sections of the society closer. Most of the business in the daily meetings of the Lahore Darbar was conducted in Punjabi for the obvious reason that it was the only language which was best understood by the ruler and his courtiers.¹³³ Even Punjabi titles were given to the chieftains. For instance, the title of *Nirmal Budh* was often awarded and some of the eminent recipients of this title were Lehna Singh Majithia, *bhai* Gobind Ram, Sher Singh, Amir Singh and Raja Tej Singh.¹³⁴ Large number of literature was written in Punjabi as well as in Persian for the masses. Sohan Lal Suri's monumental *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* was best example of the historical work produced in Persian during the first half of the nineteenth century. Ram Sukh Rao, a chronicler patronized by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, wrote a volume each on Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, his successor Bhag Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia in Gurmukhi script. Number of works like *si-harfis*, *jangnamas*, *vars*, *jhagras* and *qissas* were written for the common man.

As a compliment to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Baron Charles Hugel remarked that the kingdom founded by him seemed to be the most wonderful object in the whole world. Like a skilful architect, the Maharaja raised a 'majestic fabric' with the help of rather insignificant or unpromising fragments.¹³⁵ In retrospect it is possible to see that Ranjit Singh did evolve a structure of power by which he could reconcile all important sections of his subjects to his rule and he could turn many of them as in his supporters. He revived prosperity and minimized oppression. His liberal and non-sectarian policies brought different sections of the society much closer together than ever before.

¹³² H.R.Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 397.

¹³³ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 70.

¹³⁴ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 71; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 31, 88.

¹³⁵ Baron Hugel, *Travels in the Cashmir and the Punjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 293-94.

CHAPTER - II

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The society of the Punjab was based on hierarchical structure. Ganesh Das writing soon after 1849 provides information about the composition of the population of the core dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in *Char Bagh -i- Punjab*. He familiarizes us with the religious affiliations of the people of the Punjab but his categories of social classification were *qaum*, *tabqa*, *giroh*, *urf* or *firqa* and not merely Sikh, Hindu and Muslim. Furthermore, he does not refer to individuals as merely Brahmans, Khattris or Jats. He refers also to their *got*, subcaste or clan besides different professions and occupations.¹ Steinbach also reflects upon the population of the Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. According to him it was composed of a great variety of races and religions but the bulk were divided into Hindus (including Sikhs) and Muslims, the former of whom were in the proportion of three to one of the latter.² With the decline of Mughal-Afghan empire new occupational structure in which peasantry had predominant role came into existence. The new ruling class had emerged from the peasantry. But still other classes and communities had important role in the social structure.

The ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore grew with its expanding political and administrative organization under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Its composition reflected the social geography of the region and the historical developments of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.³ A large number of Sikh and non-Sikh principalities came into existence. Some of the Sikh rulers subordinated a few non-Sikh principalities to their political control, and some other subverted a few of them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh subverted more principalities in the Punjab than any other ruler. Nevertheless, he preserved a large number of subordinate chiefs as vassals or

¹ J.S.Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; Structure of Power, Economy and Society*, Sita Ram Kohli Memorial Lectures, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, 22.

² Steinbach, *The Punjab: Being a Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1979, 55.

³ Indu Banga, "The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore", *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, 15.

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autonomous rulers under his political control.⁴ The establishment of Sikh rule in the Punjab in late eighteenth century involved the replacement of the Mughal and Afghan ruling class. The majority of the new ruling class was composed of Jats. The non-Jats were also represented among the ruling class and non-Sikhs among the *jagirdars*, included both Hindus and Muslims. In the process of unification under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, many of the erstwhile chiefs, vassals and *jagirdars* were absorbed into the ruling class.⁵

The ruling class of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the whole was heterogeneous in its composition, consisting of men belonging to different religions that included Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, races, regions and nationalities. The ruling class had, in fact, evolved itself over a period of time. In terms of its proportion the Sikhs were 49 per cent of the total, Hindus around 29 per cent, Muslims 16 per cent and Christians constituted about 6 per cent.⁶

Among the racial elements represented in nobility were the Jats followed by Khattris, Rajputs, Brahmans, Pathans and the Sayyids. The Jats were dominant with 30 per cent and most of whom were Sikhs. The clans represented by the Jats were Sidhu, Sansi, Sandhu, Randhawa, Shergill, Mann, Gill, Dhillon, Kahlon, Chahal, Bains, Bhinder, Virk, Sohal, Warraich and Bajwa. The Khattris were 17 per cent and represented by sub castes of Chopra, Duggal, Badhera, Bhandari, Khanna, Puri, Sahni, Behl, Anand, Kochhar, Sethi, Mehra, Maini, Uppal and Kapur. The clans of Chopra, Duggal, Badhera, Bhandari, Nanda and the Kapur figured in larger number than others. The Brahmans were 7 per cent and belonged to the Gaur, Kaul, Joshi and Vaid sub castes. The Rajputs were 11 per cent and were from the Jammu, Punch and Rajauri regions with different clan affiliations like the Katoch, Pathania and Dogra. Besides the Kharal, Awan, Tiwana and Sial were represented among the Muslims, and the Sayyids and Pathans holding the important positions with 2 per cent and 4 per

⁴ Indu Banga, "The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore" 15.

⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

⁶ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 15; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under Lahore Darbar*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1981, 3.

cent respectively.⁷ The foreigners in the nobility belonged to diverse nationalities like French, English, Germans, Irish, Italians, Americans, Spaniards, Greek and Austrians.⁸

The social background of the nobility of the Lahore Darbar was equally diverse. About one-fifth of the members were the dispossessed chiefs and their dependents who were mostly Sikh *misdars*, Rajputs, Afghans and Pathans. Sardar Fateh Singh, Mit Singh Padania, Sardar Attar Singh Dhari, Hukm Singh Attari and Hukma Singh Chimni represented the families of Sikh *misdars* and other men were from the families of the Pathan rulers of Kasur, Multan and Jhang. This policy of recruitment followed by Ranjit Singh was aimed at the conciliation of the dispossessed and weakened chiefs and also to pacify the feelings of the community to which they belonged.⁹

Maharaja Ranjit Singh could not depend upon the dispossessed chiefs alone. He, therefore, added a fresh element to the nobility. Such nobles were picked up by the Maharaja on the basis of their merit and ability. They were given important positions in the civil administration as well as in the army. Almost all of them were the holders of large *jagirs*.¹⁰ A large number of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus from non-aristocratic background were picked up by him to serve the state: individuals like Hari Singh Nalwa, Gurmukh Singh Lamba, Diwan Sawan Mal, Karnail Mihan Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Muhiuddin. Families like the Attariwalas, the Majithias, the Faqirs and Jamwals were holding highest positions.¹¹

⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs Historical and Biographical Notes on the Principal Families in the Territories Under the Punjab Government*, Lahore, 1865, 523-572; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Appendix, 109-119; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under Lahore Darbar*, M. Phil Dissertation, 4.

⁸ The exact number of these European officers who took service under Ranjit Singh can not be determined, though Carmichael Smyth enumerates them as 39 in all- Italian, French, English and Anglo-Indian. Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore With Some Account of Jammoo Rajahs, the Sikh Soldiers and Their Sirdars*, W Thacker and Co., Calcutta, 1887, Appendix, xxxvi-xxxvii; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, V.V.R.I, Hoshiarpur, 1968, 271.

⁹ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 15; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 263, 265; Indu Banga, "State Formation Under Sikh Rule", *Journal of Regional History*, Vol. I, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 27-28.

¹⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; Structure of Power, Economy and Society*, 32; Indu Banga, *State Formation Under Sikh Rule*, 27.

¹¹ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 15; Indu Banga, *The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore Darbar*, 20.

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More new members were inducted from within or outside the core region. Before joining the services of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Diwan Bhawani Dass, Diwan Ganga Ram and Diwan Dina Nath had earned experience under the different states.¹² The Jamwal brothers Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh who were the most important and the most influential members of the nobility, were inducted from outside the core region.¹³

Among the nobility of Lahore Darbar, Jat Sikhs constituted the majority. They were from agricultural background with 30 per cent Jats and were followed by mercantile castes like the Khattris, Aroras and Banias, who were slightly above 17 per cent.¹⁴ The professional castes such as *tarkhan*, *nai*, *mehra* (water-carriers), *kalal*, *saraf* and *mochi* were more than 2 per cent. Their influential Sardars were Fateh Singh (*kalal*), Budh Singh (*mehra*), Dal Singh, Attar Singh and Shamsheer Singh (*nai*), Bir Singh and Diwan Singh (*tarkhan*), Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din and Sheikh Imam-ud-din (*mochi*).¹⁵ Thus the nobility of the Lahore Darbar represented the top most strata of the society next to the Maharaja and his family.

In the social scale, religious classes played an important role. Besides the ruling class, the society was dominated by them. There were three eminent religions prevalent in the Punjab---- Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam---- each had its own religious groups.¹⁶ In the hierarchy of the Hindu social order Brahmans occupied the status of religious elite. Not only according to *gotra*, they were graded also on the basis of their professions. Those who received higher education in Hindi and Sanskrit were called *pandits*. They were generally concerned with the spiritual guidance of the people.

¹² Diwan Bhawani Dass worked as revenue officer under Shah Shuja. Ganga Ram worked under the ruler of Gwalior. Diwan Dina Nath was employed at Delhi. G.L.Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, V.V.R.I, Hoshiarpur, 1975, 105-108; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 71, 73, 74.

¹³ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 32; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 96-99; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 244-250.

¹⁴ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Appendix, 109-119; Indu Banga, "State Formation Under Sikh Rule", 113.

¹⁵ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Appendix, 109-119; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under Lahore Darbar*, Appendix-G, 154-155.

¹⁶ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Master Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, 283-84; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 401.

Those who studied astrology and palmistry were known as *gyotishis*. However, most of the Brahmans were illiterate. Yet the names of their *jajmans* were at the tips of their fingers. There was a large body of the Brahmans living only to be fed. They consisted of members of the *purohit's* families or those who settled in villages where they had low hereditary clients.¹⁷ The Brahmans who served the Khattris as their hereditary clients were known as *Khatrian da Bahaman* (Brahman of the Khattris). Those who served the Aroras were known as *Aroriyan da Bahaman* (Brahman of the Aroras). The status of the Brahman was reflected in the social position of their clients. That is why the Brahman of high castes did not perform service for the lower castes. The Chamars had their own priests called *chamarwa* Brahman.¹⁸ Denzil Ibbetson observed that the Brahmans of the Punjab were not concerned with, 'the spiritual guidance of the people'. Nevertheless, they were consulted about omens and auspicious names, dates and events. They officiated at all ceremonial functions. These duties were performed by only a small proportion of the total number of Brahmans. He observed further that in terms of numbers the Brahmans were next to the Jats and the Rajputs. Many of the Brahmans received offerings and were fed by their clients without the performance of any specific service. In many cases large number of Brahmans supplemented their income by practicing agriculture.¹⁹

The presence of Brahman was essential at every stage of life. Traditional relationship between Hindu *jajman* or patron and the Brahman, *purohit* or family priest was still intact. Without his advice no child was named, betrothed or married, nobody could be cremated, no journey was performed, no house was built, no agricultural operation was begun and no harvest was gathered in without the Brahmans being fed.²⁰ He played an important role during birth and matrimonial affairs of his *jajmans*, where he was treated as *lagi*. He accompanied barber to conduct the preliminaries of match making. He also performed wedding ceremonies

¹⁷ Parveen Dewan, *Brahmans in Punjab 1880-1930*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 14-15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, B.R. Publisher, Delhi, 1974, 215.

²⁰ Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Politics, Society and Economy*, Punjabi Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, 279; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, Harman Publication, New Delhi, 1983, 283-284; Parveen Dewan, *Brahmans in Punjab 1880-1930*, M. Phil Dissertation, 13-14.

of the Hindus and Sikhs according to Vedic rites.²¹ The Brahman priest who performed over the last rites of a deceased was entitled to all the household articles in the names of the deceased were called *maha* Brahman or *achraj* or *charji*. He generally accompanied his patrons for performing the last rites on the Ganges.²²

In society, the presence of a Brahman was necessary in religious and social ceremonies though his social status in Punjab was not the same as elsewhere in India. He was described as grasping, over bearing, quarrelsome, inflated with pride in his own descent and contempt for others. His declining position was shown in proverbs like, ‘a *dum*, a Brahman and a goat are of no avail in time of need’ or ‘a famine from desert, so comes evil from a Brahman’.²³ It was unlucky to accost a Brahman while proceeding on a journey. The Brahmans having lost a lucrative profession had drifted towards others occupations like agriculture and money lending. They were found as traders in towns and villages and were addressed as *Misir*.²⁴

Some of the Brahmans had however been admitted to the nobility of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and were awarded status of royal priests. Almost all the chiefs in Lahore Darbar had a *pandit* in their establishment. For instance, Vigne found Raja Suchet Singh consulting his *pandit* who was an astrologer, even going out for hunting.²⁵ A considerable number of Brahmans figured in the pages of Sohan Lal Suri’s *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*. Many of them were associated with civil and military administration and rose to high positions. The most important of them were Diwan Dina Nath, *Misir* Diwan Chand, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Tej Singh, Diwan Ganga Ram, *Misir* Beli Ram, Rup Lal, Ajodhiya Parsad, Amir Chand, Jassa Mal, Lal Singh, Madhusudan,

²¹ Raja Ram, *Jhagra Tiunh Yaran Da* (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Jhagre*, Sardar Sahit Bhawan, Patiala, 1974, 21; Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1946, 16, 19; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 384.

²² Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai*, 15, 19; Ram Sukh Rao, *Shri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), Patiala, 1980, 57; Daljinder Singh Johal, “Literary Evidence on Social Structure in The Punjab”, *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 64.

²³ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 221; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 384, 401.

²⁴ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1982, 518; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 384; Parveen Dewan, *Brahmans in Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, 6.

²⁵ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. I, Whittakar and Co., London, 1840, 191-192.

Megh Raj, Radha Kishan, Ram Kishan, Rup Lal and Sukh Raj.²⁶ They were awarded titles and granted large *jagirs*. Misr Diwan Chand rose from the position of a clerk to the foremost general and was rewarded with the proud titles of *Jafar Jang Bahadur*²⁷ and *Fateh-o-Nusrat Nasib*.²⁸ Misr Basti Ram had served Sardar Mahan Singh before he was appointed as a treasurer by Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Amritsar. His nephews also served the Lahore Darbar with distinction. Misr Beli Ram was one of the most trusted treasurers of the Maharaja. Misr Rup Lal was the governor of the Jalandhar *doab*.²⁹ Ganga Ram served the Maharaja as a Diwan and introduced reforms in the system of military account. His son Ajudhiya Parsad was even better known as a Diwan of the Maharaja.³⁰ Jamadar Khushal Singh held 25 different *jagirs* worth rupees 4,37,315.³¹ Misr Beli Ram and his brothers enjoyed *jagirs* worth rupees 60,000- 70,000.³² In the later years of Ranjit Singh, Diwan Dina Nath received *jagirs* in Amritsar, Dinanagar and Kasur districts to the value of 9,900 rupees.³³

In 1835, when the Maharaja was ill he engaged a number of Brahmans to pray for him. The head *pandit* washed the toes of other Brahmans and gave that water to Maharaja to drink it and the Maharaja drank it.³⁴ The Brahmans always received alms and charities by the way of *nazar* at every festive occasion. On the day *sankranti* and *amavas* of every month, they got larger share of the Maharaja's charities.³⁵ In 1830, on the day of *amavas* of *bhadon*, the Maharaja gave to Brahmans some horses,

²⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut- Tawarikh*, Daftar II, (Pbi translated), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 166, 268, 282, 297, 302, 305, 419; Daftar III (Eng), 9, 13, 19, 32, 34, 42, 177, 142, 182, 207; G.L.Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 106-09; Parveen Dewan, *Brahmans in Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, 11.

²⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 304; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh Maharaja of the Punjab (1780-1839)*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, 126; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 269.

²⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 317-318; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 72.

²⁹ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 70; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs: Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, 124-129.

³⁰ G.L.Chopra, "Civil Administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XIV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1980, 32-33.

³¹ Fauja Singh, *State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 262; Shahmat Ali estimated that the *jagirs* of Jamadar Khushal Singh, which he enjoyed at the close of his life worth Rs, 4,60,600. Shahmat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans in Connexion With India and Persia*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 28-29.

³² Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 259.

³³ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 74.

³⁴ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 379; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 421; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 287.

³⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III, 38, 87, 198, 424, 430.

elephants and suits of clothes.³⁶ In 1835 on the day of *sankranti* of the month of *poh*, the Maharaja offered the Brahmans who performed *paryog*, several cows, a suit of clothes, one horse, one elephant and many other things comprising the *tuladan* with a large sum in cash.³⁷

The *pandits* of Lahore Darbar Brij Raj and Madhusudan received land which was worth thousands of rupees a year.³⁸ *Pandit* Madhusudan, was a well known astrologer.³⁹ His son Radha Kishan, served as the tutor of Raja Hira Singh first and then of the young Maharaja Dalip Singh.⁴⁰ *Pandit* Wazir Chand received a *dharmarth* pension in cash worth rupees 50 a year from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In Khangarh a Brahman named Nanak Chand received a grant of one rupee per month from the Maharaja. Another Brahman named Damodar son of Ram Dyal received a *dharmarth* pension of worth of 6 *bigas* of land per annum from the Maharaja. *Purohit* Ramdit, received a grant worth over 2000 rupees a year in *mauza* Mussania *pargana* Batala from one of the Maharani of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Gurdaspur district. Later on this grant was confirmed by Maharaja Kharak Singh. *Purohit* Harnam Das also received grant worth over rupees 2000 per year from the Maharani of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁴¹

Besides Brahmans, *sadhus*, *jogis* and *sanyasais* held a respectful place among the Hindus. They believed in efficacious powers and miracles. The *vairagi* or *bairagi* word was usually applied in the Punjab to a regular order of *vaishnava* devotees. They were the wandering mendicants generally found in Lahore and Amritsar districts.⁴² The *sannyasis* generally wore ochre coloured garments and some of them remained naked. They could be distinguished by the *tilak*-mark on their foreheads. Some *sannyasis* carried a tiger's or panther's skin on their shoulders. Most of them used ash for the *tilak*-mark which generally consisted of three horizontal lines representing the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 482.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Daftar III(I-III)II, 342.

³⁸ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 161.

³⁹ Lepal Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs Historical and Biographical Notes on the Principal Families in the Territories Under the Punjab Government*, Vol. II, 255-57.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 313; Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule (1750-1850)*, M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1987, 25, 26.

⁴² Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 227; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 405.

trident of Shiva or his third eye. Some used only two horizontal lines with a dot, considered to be a representation of the phallic emblem of Shiva. The wearing of *tilak* mark was regarded as an important ritual.⁴³ Distinct from the *sannyasis* but closely connected with Shaivism were the *jogis*. The *jogis* were frequently mentioned as the *kanphatas*, who pierced their ears to wear large rings. The *jogis* were priest of Shiva and were generally found in *shivalas*. Their principal orders were *aghorapanthis* and *nathapanthis*.⁴⁴

During the nineteenth century, Hindu religious establishments and individuals received extensive patronage from the Sikh rulers. Besides the confirmation of their *madad-i-maash*, the Sikh rulers gave them fresh grants of revenue free land and other concessions. Towards the end of Sikh rule, the grants given to *vaishnava* institutions, amounted to about 40,000 rupees a year.⁴⁵ Among the top most *vaishnava* establishments was the Pandori *dham* which had become the most venerated institution under the Sikh rule. The rulers like Jai Singh Kanhiya, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors had given fresh grants to the *mahants* of Pandori, besides confirming their old grants.⁴⁶ The total amount received by this centre was over 14,000 rupees a year towards the end of the Sikh rule. A *vaishnava* centre at Tera in the district of Sialkot founded by Madho Das *bairagi* enjoyed grants worth over 600 rupees a year. The establishment of *baba* Sarup Das enjoyed revenue free grants worth over 1000 rupees a year from Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1822. The Pandori shrines received over rupees 8000 in Jethowal, Bhagwanpur, Dakhla, Maharajpur, Thakarwal and Keso Kalal in Gurdaspur.⁴⁷ However, Pandori was not the only *vaishnava* establishment to attract the attention of Sikh rulers. They gave large grants of revenue free land to the other *vaishnava gaddis* at Dhianpur and Dhamtal.⁴⁸

Numerous grants were given to individual *bairagis*. Raja Ram received a *dharmarth* grant valued rupees 300 per annum from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The

⁴³ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Publication Bureau, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1969, 109.

⁴⁴ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 235-36; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 405.

⁴⁵ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 22, 23.

⁴⁶ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 163.

⁴⁷ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 23.

⁴⁸ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 163.

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Maharaja also confirmed grant of rupees 300 per annum of *baba* Dwarka Das. Other *bairagis* like Kishan Das, Bishan Das, Jiwan Das, Tulsi Das, Raghu Das, Mohan Das, Ganga Das, Anant Das, Ram Das, Hira Das, Balram Das, Prem Das, Muluk Das and Balak Das received grants from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sher Singh, Nau Nihal Singh and Dalip Singh⁴⁹

Among the Sikh religious classes, *gianis*, *bhais*, *granthis*, *udasis*, Bedis, Sodhis and Akalis occupied eminent position. The *bhais* were in-charge of the Sikh shrines, and *granthis* conducted religious services of *shabad*, *ardas* and *parshad*. Among the Sikhs they enjoyed position of great honour and influence. In the Lahore Darbar, *bhai* Wasti Ram, *bhai* Ram Singh, *bhai* Govind Ram, *giani* Sant Singh and *giani* Gurmeet Singh held prominent place.⁵⁰ Among all of them, *bhai* Wasti Ram was influential person, and was looked upon almost as a guru by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After his death the Maharaja was a frequent visitor to his *samadh*. Lakhs of rupees as a *nazar* and rich *jagirs* were granted to him. *Bhai* Gobind Das, *bhai* Ram Singh, sons of *bhai* Wasti Ram were always in attendance upon the Maharaja and were very close to him.⁵¹

The *granthis* of the Sikh shrines also received revenue free grants from the Sikh rulers. For example, Kahan Singh *granthi* received a grant of value of 900 rupees a year from Sardar Charat Singh. Later on this grant was confirmed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Fateh Singh, the head *granthi* of the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, enjoyed a *jagir* of over rupees 600 a year in Gurdaspur district. The heirs of Jassa Singh, late head *granthi* of the Darbar Sahib, received pension for life.⁵² Similarly, the *ardasias*, *ragis*, *rababis* and *mutasaddis* of the Darbar Sahib also enjoyed grants all over the Punjab.⁵³

Bedis and Sodhis had been respected among the Sikhs because of their lineal association with the Sikh Gurus. The Bedis were also called Nanak *putras* (the descendants of Guru Nanak Dev). They were treated with the same distinction and

⁴⁹ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 23, 24.

⁵⁰ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 418; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 285.

⁵¹ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 285

⁵² Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 20, 21.

⁵³ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 159.

respect as the Brahmans among the Hindus and Sayyids among the Muslims. They were mainly travelling merchants.⁵⁴

Bedis were patronized by the Sikh rulers and held revenue free lands all over the Punjab. A large number of grants were given to the Bedis by *jagirdars* and *ghurcharhas* like Sham Singh Kunjahia under Charat Singh Sukarchakia.⁵⁵ Maharaja Ranjit Singh paid extensive respect to them. Charan Singh Bedi of Phagwara, was granted two villages by the Maharaja, and instead of cash at the Bedis offered *chhoti ilaichi* to the Maharaja by way of *nazar*.⁵⁶

The head of the Bedis was *baba* Sahib Singh of Una. He accompanied Maharaja Ranjit Singh on several of his expeditions. The Maharaja rewarded him generously from time to time. He had profound regard for the *baba* Sahib Singh Bedi. For instance, in 1817 when Sahib Singh was on a visit to Shahdara, Prince Kharak Singh was specially commissioned to wait upon him and convey the respectful regards to him.⁵⁷ In 1825, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered the march of his royal standards from Amb to Una, had the honour of going into the service of the respected *baba* Sahib Singh and became fortunate on seeking the alchemy of association with him, put before the respected *baba* something by way of offering and securing a robe of honour of kindness and favour and felt very happy.⁵⁸ Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted large *jagirs* to Sahib Singh. He was granted the villages in Udhewali and Una.⁵⁹ Bikram Singh, son of Sahib Singh, possessed several strong forts and used to maintain large bodies of armed men.⁶⁰

Among the Sikh religious classes Sodhis descendants from fourth Guru, Ram Das were equally held in high esteem. They were great landlords as well as merchants. They were not far behind the Bedis in receiving patronage from the Sikh

⁵⁴ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 415, 504; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 284.

⁵⁵ Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab During the Late Eighteenth Century*, Manohar, Delhi, 1993, 122.

⁵⁶ Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Politics, Society and Economy*, 280; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 415.

⁵⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 223; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 284; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 415.

⁵⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 382.

⁵⁹ Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i- Ranjit Singh* (tr. Kirpal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, 61; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 415.

⁶⁰ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 158.

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rulers. Many Sodhi families were in the active service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja attributed his success in politics and government to the blessings of *bhai* Wasti Ram particularly and his regard for the Sodhis in general increased because of the *bhai*.⁶¹

The most prominent family of the Sodhis during the Sikh period was Sodhi Badbhag Singh of Kartarpur.⁶² His son, Sodhi Sadhu Singh was a man of significance. He received large *jagirs* from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1835, Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself visited the camp of Sodhi Sadhu Singh of Kartarpur paid his obeisance to him by prostration and offered an *ardas* of rupees 1000. The Sodhi on the departure of the Maharaja presented him one elephant and one horse along with a precious *khillat*. On this occasion *khillats* were also presented by him to Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Hira Singh, who were accompanying the Maharaja.⁶³ The Sodhis were also given large *jagirs* at Anandpur Sahib, Kartarpur and Kiratpur. The Sodhis and Bedis, together, received more than forty per cent of the revenue alienated in *dharmarth* by the Lahore Darbar.⁶⁴

After the Bedis and Sodhis, the *udasis* were the largest section of the Sikh religious classes. They were followers of *baba* Sri Chand, son of Guru Nanak Dev. They practised Hindu rites, wore the *tilak* or sect mark and rejected the *granth* of Guru Gobind but revered the *Adi Granth*. On account of their sacred character, they were employed as escorts on trade route in the Punjab ensuring safety from attack or pillage by robbers.⁶⁵

Towards the end of Sikh rule nearly 75 per cent of the *udasi* institutions, besides some individual grantees, were enjoying state patronage. The *udasi mahants* were managing more than 200 institutions out of which about a hundred and fifty were enjoying state patronage under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. The

⁶¹ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 158; 156; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 504.

⁶² Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 157; Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 19.

⁶³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III, 315; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, footnote no. 46, 157.

⁶⁴ According to Cunningham, Bedis and Sodhis enjoyed 4 and 5 lace respectively. J.D.Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, Appendix XXXVIII, 385; J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 34; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 157.

⁶⁵ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 228; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 406; Sulakhan Singh, *Heterodoxy in Sikh Tradition*, ABS Publications, Jalandhar, 1999, 14-15.

number of such patronized institutions towards the close of the eighteenth century was nearly 50. In the early nineteenth century, over 60 new *udasi* establishments came to be patronized.⁶⁶ Among these were the *akhara* of *mahant* Balanand and *akhara* of *mahant* Ghamand Das in the city of Amritsar, the *akhara* of *baba* Sidki Das at Gujranwala and the *akhara* of *baba* Sant Das in Gurdaspur.⁶⁷

Towards the end of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule, about one third of the old *udasi* centers were enjoying grants confirmed or given afresh by the Maharaja. Among the *udasis*, *mahant* Brahmruop was perhaps the first to receive a grant in 1796 for the maintenance of the *akhara* of *mahant* Pritam Das in the city of Amritsar. However, the maximum of *dharmarth* grants were given to the *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das, worth rupees 18,000 a year. *Dera* Baba Nanak was offered worth rupees 12,000 a year. *Udasi akharas*, *deras*, *darbars*, *samadhs* and *dharmshalas* enjoyed revenue free grants ranging from 1000 to 9000 rupees a year and over a hundred from 10 to 200 rupees year.⁶⁸ The *udasis* received *dharmarth jagirs* which amounted about two lace rupees a year.⁶⁹

The Akalis or *nihangs* formed a conspicuous class of the Sikhs. The word Akali means immortal and was used for *nihangs*, a particular order of the Sikhs which claimed its origin from Guru Gobind Singh. They were zealot soldiers and warrior priests. They had assumed the office of the guardians of the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar and acted as censor of morals of the Sikhs people and preservers of the original ordinances of the faith.⁷⁰ The Akalis were also patronized by the Sikh rulers. The famous Akali, Phula Singh was not the only *nihang* who enjoyed the generosity of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The *nihangs* of Bibeksar in Amritsar received *dharmarth* grants from Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successor.⁷¹ Phula Singh was the main leader of the Akalis. The Maharaja not only treated them gently but also made

⁶⁶ Sulakhan Singh, *Heterodoxy in the Sikh Tradition*, 49; Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 17-18.

⁶⁷ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 18.

⁶⁸ Sulakhan Singh, *Heterodoxy in the Sikh Tradition*, 50-51; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 286.

⁶⁹ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 34; Sulakhan Singh, *State Patronage to the Udis* (ed. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 103.

⁷⁰ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 228-29; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 406; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 434.

⁷¹ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, 22.

handsome charities to them. On May, 1831 *sankranti* day, rupees 5,500 were given to the Akalis.⁷² In November 1835, on the day of *sankranti* some cows and 300 silver ducats were given in charity to the Akalis on the performance of *samkalap*.⁷³

Among the Muslim *sayyids*, *qazis*, *sheikhs*, *ulemas* and *mullahs* constituted the religious class. They possessed the knowledge of the *fiqh* and the Quran. The *sayyids* and the *sheikhs* belonged to the upper strata of the Muslim society. They were credited with possessing the knowledge of occult phenomena and of supernatural mysteries. The *sayyids* scattered through out the Punjab, were also the landowners and cultivators.⁷⁴ The Sikh government granted to them certain favours and concessions. The amount of revenue to be charged from them was fixed at a low rate.⁷⁵ The *ulema*, considered themselves as the *ashraf* that is noble and higher in descent than the general masses of the Punjabi Muslims. They maintained their position as heads of celebrated shrines and adorned religious places of Muslim worship.⁷⁶ The *mullahs* did play a creditable role as teachers in *maktabs*. They gave calls and led the prayers and also preached the doctrines and injunctions of Islam. They were known for their role as an exorcist, they kept rosaries and amulets, repeated incantations from the Quran in seclusion.⁷⁷ The *qazis* solemnized the *niqah* or marriages of the Muslims.⁷⁸

Sikh rulers in general and the Maharaja in particular also patronized the Muslim religious classes. All old grants enjoyed by the *sayyids*, *ulemas* and *fakirs* were confirmed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A *sayyid* named Nathu Shah enjoyed a charitable *jagir* of the ½ *mauza* of Islampur Chakti in Jalandhar *pargana* worth over 300 rupees a year, granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Mahtab Singh *faqir* received a *dharmarth* grant of 20 *bighas* of land from Maharaja Ranjit Singh in *mauza*

⁷² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 40-41, 96-97; Daftar III (IV-V), 80.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁷⁴ B.J. Hasrat *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 402; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 222; Daljit Singh, *Punjab Social and Economic Condition (1501-1700)*, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2004, 87.

⁷⁵ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 280.

⁷⁶ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 213.

⁷⁷ Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Politics, Society and Economy*, 280; Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1976, 9, 10.

⁷⁸ *Qazi sadya paran nu niqah*. The *qazi* was called for performing *niqah*. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok), 77, 78; Barjinder Kaur, *The Jats in the Punjab During the 19th Century*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 36.

Shariefpur of Lahore district. A *fakir* Khair-ud-din of Sheikhpura received a grant from Sardar Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. Sher Singh granted rupees 50 per year to *sayyid* Ahmed Shah.⁷⁹

The Muslim priesthood enjoyed a position of privilege and power as the old.⁸⁰ Soon after the occupation of Lahore in 1799, Muslim judges were appointed to deal with Muslims civil cases. In Lahore Darbar, *qazi* Nizam-ud-din was appointed as religious head of Muslims. He was invested with full authority in religious matters. His deputy was Sadullah Chishti. The civil cases like mortgages, sales and contracts etc. were entrusted to Mufti Muhammad Shah. Khalifa Nur-ud-din was nominated as public physician with the title of *hakim ansari*.⁸¹ Muslim religious persons who received special favour from Maharaja Ranjit Singh were the custodians of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh, Rauza Abu-al-Muali, *baba* Farid Saidan Shah, Hazrat Sakhi Sarwar's *dargah* and Madho Lal Hussain's mausoleum.⁸² In 1838, Maharaja Ranjit Singh went to the mausoleum of Hazrat Ganj Baksh Hujveri through the Taxsali gate and offered rupees 125 by way of *nazar*.⁸³

In keeping with Maharaja Ranjit Singh's liberal views, he and the royal family used to take part alike in Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religious festivals. The Maharaja on a few occasions was even present at *id-ul-fitr*, although that is a strictly Muslim religious festival and during *muharram* young princes used to make offerings just as if they had been Muslims.⁸⁴ About the religious attitude of the Maharaja Jacquemont states that he was a 'Seikh by profession, a sceptic in reality'.⁸⁵

In the society the mercantile classes played an important social or economic role. The mercantile communities among the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were represented by Khatris, Aroras, Baniyas, Sodhis, Bedis, Lubanas, Khojas and Prachas. They formed

⁷⁹ Balwinderjeet, *Dharmarth Grants Under Sikh Rule*, M.Phil Dissertation, 28-29.

⁸⁰ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 402.

⁸¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 32.

⁸² Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 287; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 425-27.

⁸³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 184.

⁸⁴ F.S.Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Lion Art Press, Karachi, 1965, 23.

⁸⁵ Victor Jacquemont, *Letters From India: Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere During the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831 Under the Order of the French Government* (tr. from French), Vol. I, 399.

the backbone of trade and commerce. There were no banks and the functions of banks were performed by these classes. They acted as bankers, shopkeepers and moneylenders. A sympathetic moneylender with a soft and serene behaviour commanded great respect. He was called *shah ji* and *lala ji*. His status is thus depicted in an old proverb:

*“bina guru gat nahin
bina shah pat nahin.”*⁸⁶

(There is no salvation without Guru, there is no honour without the banker).

The Khatri occupied very important position among the people of Punjab. Though they claimed a Rajput or Kshatriya descent, but their main occupation was commerce and could use the sword when necessary. They considered themselves superior to other communities in the sphere of education and trading. They were Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. They were enterprising as merchants and frugal as ant. They were the principal financiers and accountants of the Lahore Darbar.⁸⁷ Ganesh Das specially refers to many Khatri families living in the towns and villages of the Punjab.⁸⁸ There was hardly a town in the Punjab where Khatri did not have their houses. The Khatri ran shops in villages, in towns and near military cantonments and acted as money lenders and *sarafs*. Whenever it was possible, they acquired land and devoted part of their life into cultivation. As *shahukars* they held commanding influence over the peasant community in the villages.⁸⁹ Many of them also acted as *panch* and *chaudharis*. When ever a Jat cultivator or landowner was held captive, the Khatri moneylender stood surety for his release.⁹⁰ In the Punjab “no village could get

⁸⁶ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 502.

⁸⁷ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 247-48; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 403.

⁸⁸ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, 26.

⁸⁹ *Jattan nu oh pakar mangawan sau sau maran taane*. Tulsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Jhagre*, Sardar Sahit Bhawan, Patiala, 1974, 74; Sangita Jaggi, *Business Communities in the City of Amritsar Under Colonial Rule*, Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, 7.

⁹⁰ *Wich kachehri de badda see, mere munsh churaya*. Tulsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani da*, 74; Sangita Jaggi, *Business Communities in the City of Amritsar*, M. Phil Dissertation, 7.

on without the Khatri who kept the accounts, did the banking business and purchased and sold food grains".⁹¹

The extension of Sikh rule towards the Indus and beyond, opened new opportunities for trade and commerce. The Khatri monopolized the trade of the Punjab and Afghanistan and did a great deal of business in the other neighbouring countries too.⁹² The flourishing state of industry during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh benefited the commercial classes. In their various commercial pursuits the Khatri were at a great advantage as compared to the traders of other communities.⁹³ Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh their respect and status increased and were appointed to high positions in civil and military departments. They emerged as great warriors and administrators too. The most prominent Khatri courtiers of Lahore Darbar were Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal, Hari Singh Nalwa, Moti Ram, Kirpa Ram and Ram Dayal.⁹⁴

The Aroras were next in importance to the Khatri in the Punjab. Aroras claimed to be at par with Khatri, which Khatri did not accept. According to Ibbetson, Aroras were Khatri ethnical group.⁹⁵ Religiously, they were both Hindus and Sikhs. But majority of them were Hindus.⁹⁶ They were active industrious, enterprising and thrifty. Some of them were accountants, bankers and *shahukars* and in latter capacity they had acquired considerable amount of land by mortgage or purchase from other cultivators.⁹⁷ The Aroras were inferior physique and their character was thus summed up: 'a cowardly, secretive, acquisitive race but very necessary and useful in their way. They possessed a few manly qualities and were

⁹¹ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 48; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 276.

⁹² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 502.

⁹³ Among the Khatri, Bedis and Sodhis were received preferential treatment by the state and were granted a considerable percentage of relief in taxation. Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 276.

⁹⁴ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 503; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Appendix, 109-119; R.K. Dewvedi, *The Khatri in Punjab With Special References to the 19th Century*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1986, 133.

⁹⁵ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 251.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 251; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 503.

⁹⁷ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 50-51; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 390; Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M. Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, 13,14.

both despised and envied'.⁹⁸ The proverbs of Punjab peasantry were full of allusions to the cowardice and treachery of this tribe thus "the thieves were four and we were eighty four, the thieves came and we ran away, demn the thieves well done us". The Aroras were also known as Kirar, a word almost synonymous with coward. The Aroras were worst branded in the proverbs such "trust not crow, a dog, or a Kirar, even when asleep". Or "you can't make a friend of a Kirar anymore then a *sati* or a prostitute".⁹⁹

Other commercial class among the Hindus was constituted by the Banias. The word Bania was derived from the Sanskrit *banijya* or trader or shopkeeper. As the name implies, they lived solely for and by commerce. They were big merchants, banker and money lenders to villages.¹⁰⁰ The Banias were said to be intelligent, enterprising, industrious and ambitious. They carried flourishing business and exercised complete economic domination over the lives of other communities particularly the agricultural classes. The peasantry did not like them. They were bankers and moneylenders to villagers and due to which they were perhaps both respected and feared.¹⁰¹ They acted as money lenders in rural areas and hence, generally had poor reputation for being grasping and extortionists. They were looked down upon by the peasantry as a cowardly money grubber. They were hardly used by the proverbial wisdom of the countryside, 'he who has a Bania friend does not require an enemy' and 'first beat a Bania, then a thief'.¹⁰²

In addition to the well established business communities there were the petty traders, goods carriers, peddlers, hawkers and green grocers, and the most important among these were Labanas. The term Labana appeared to be derived from *loon* (salt) and *bana* (trade) and the Labanas specialized as salt carriers and salt traders. Indeed the Labanas were occasionally called *banjaras*.¹⁰³ In their religious affiliations they were Hindus, Sikhs and the Muslims. In the business management, they could not

⁹⁸ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 51; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 390.

⁹⁹ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 251.

¹⁰⁰ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 502; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 242.

¹⁰¹ Kawaljit Kaur, *Business Communities of Jalandhar (1846-1947)*, M. Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1990, 23.

¹⁰² Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 242; Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M. Phil Dissertation, 17.

¹⁰³ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 51; J.S. Grewal *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24; Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M. Phil Dissertation, 24, 25.

compete with the Khattris and Aroras. They were employed by them. They possessed great courage and endurance. Originally, the Labanas were the transporters and carriers. They supplied and carried grains and other goods of necessity in different parts of the country. They had their own pack animals. The trade was conducted in the shape of caravans.¹⁰⁴ Cattle trade was also prevalent among them.¹⁰⁵ They were chiefly found in the districts of Gurdaspur, Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala and Sialkot.¹⁰⁶ Like the other trading communities, the Labanas also harvested profits from the expansion of trade. Thus their financial position gradually improved.¹⁰⁷ Under the Sikh rule, majority of the Labanas continued their former occupation. Bulk of them earned livelihood as professional carriers and only some of them were traders. This process was accelerated by the agrarian policies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁰⁸

Bhatias though in small number, they played an important role in the grain business. Like the Khattris they too, claimed Rajput descent. On the whole, however, they occupied inferior position both in social and in mercantile sense. They were considered below the Khattris and the Aroras.¹⁰⁹ Suds were wholly mercantile in their pursuits though occasionally took service as clerks and occupied social position markedly inferior to that of either of the Banias or the Khattris. Religiously they were mostly Hindus.¹¹⁰

Among the Sikhs, Bedis and Sodhis (Khattris) constituted the mercantile communities. They were travelling merchants. Bedis monopolized external trade in Majha and Gurdaspur. One fourth of customs duty was remitted to them by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹¹¹ Sodhis were equally held in high esteem. They were great landlords as well as merchants. As traders they were charged only half the amount of tolls. They

¹⁰⁴ Jaswant Singh, *Labanas in the Punjab (1849-1947)*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1984, 7.

¹⁰⁵ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V 503; Jaswant Singh, *Labanas in the Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, 8, 9.

¹⁰⁶ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 505; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 390.

¹⁰⁷ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 244-45.

¹⁰⁸ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24-25; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 244-45; Jaswant Singh, *Labanas in the Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Sangita Jaggi, *Business Communities in the City of Amritsar*, M.Phil Dissertation, 89; Kawaljit Kaur, *Business Communities of Jalandhar*, M.Phil Dissertation, 26.

¹¹⁰ Kawaljit Kaur, *Business Communities of Jalandhar*, M.Phil Dissertation, 24.

¹¹¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 504; Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Ranjit Singh*, 284.

were frequently employed by big merchants to carry goods from one place to another to avoid expenses and inconvenience. They received special favours by the state.¹¹²

The Muslim, mercantile community was run by the Khojas and Parachas. They were generally converted to Islam from the Khatris and the Aroras. The Paracha word is said to have been derived from Paracha or 'cloth', one of the staples of their trade. The word Khoja was really nothing more than the Persian *khwajah* and meant simply men of wealth and respectability.¹¹³ Indeed Parachas and Khojas appeared to be virtually synonyms; when the Parachas were important traders, pedlars were called Khojas and where the Khojas were important traders, the peddlers were called Parachas. The Parachas were active businessmen and enterprising. Their business transactions extended to Turkistan and Afghanistan.¹¹⁴ They dealt in cloth, silk, tea and indigo. Many of them kept petty shops and some of them pursued agriculture. The Khojas were specialized in leather trade. They were fairly numerous in Lahore and Sialkot.¹¹⁵ They were manufacturers and wholesalers of leather goods. They were good hawkers. After buying goods, they hawked in the villages and sold on credit till harvest time.¹¹⁶

Agriculture was the main occupation of the overwhelming majority of the people of Punjab. About 90 per cent of the peasantry was centered in rural areas and nearly 10 per cent in towns and cities.¹¹⁷ Preponderant among the cultivators in the Punjab plains were the Jats, with their large number. They formed the backbone of the peasantry. In Amritsar, they were nearly 23 per cent of total population, in Gurdaspur 15 per cent, in Lahore 17 per cent, in Gujranwala 28 per cent and in Sialkot nearly

¹¹² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 504.

¹¹³ Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M.Phil Dissertation, 21.

¹¹⁴ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 253; J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 25; Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M.Phil Dissertation, 24.

¹¹⁵ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 25; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 404; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 504.

¹¹⁶ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 253; H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces of India*, Vol. II, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 537; Rakesh Sharma, *Business Communities in the Kingdom of Lahore*, M.Phil Dissertation, 22.

¹¹⁷ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 479.

26.2 per cent.¹¹⁸ They were especially numerous in the Bist Jalandhar and upper portions of the other *doabs*.¹¹⁹

In the Punjab, the Jats were numerically and politically most powerful. They were generally described as of Rajput origin. They were Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. In the western districts, they possessed the Muslim faith, in the central Punjab they were Sikhs, and in the south east, Hindus.¹²⁰ The Jats attached great importance to property in land. They worked in fields from sunrise to sunset and from infancy to old age. Their knowledge of crops and cattles was unrivalled. The size of the land holding was the base of their social status. It figured prominently during matrimonial settlement among those who were well-off. A Jat with a large holding also held more power and prestige because he had more labour and menial attached to his family.¹²¹ The Sikh Jat was by far the best agriculturist of the three. The Hindu Jat was not diligent and hard working or self-reliant as the Sikh but he was decidedly superior to the Muslim Jat. The Sikh Jat was truly described as the backbone of the province by character and physique as well as by locality. He was sturdy, hardworking, industrious and independent agriculturist. He was a husbandman from the womb, “the Jat’s baby has a plough handle for a plaything”.¹²² The Sikh Jat owned most of the land, belonged to the ruling class in the Punjab under the Sikhs and remained distinct from the Rajput whom they had subjugated. During Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s reign, Jat Sikhs, comprising bulk of the Khalsa army and had the advantage of their higher place among the Sikhs.¹²³

Rajputs were the other important ethnic group of agriculture. Pride of blood was their greatest impediment. Prejudice against the use of plough was so strong among them that they would follow any other pursuit except agriculture. As

¹¹⁸ Radha Sharma, *Peasantry and The State, Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, K.K. Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, 40-46.

¹¹⁹ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 23.

¹²⁰ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 400; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 479.

¹²¹ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature (1750-1850)*, Ph.D Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 206; Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 519.

¹²² Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 102; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 479; A.H. Bingley, *History, Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujars*, Ess Ess Publications, New Delhi, 1978,14, 90.

¹²³ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 400.

cultivators, the Rajputs were in 'no way inferior to Jats but they generally had their lands cultivated by tenants'.¹²⁴ They were excellent soldiers, but poor cultivators. In the Punjab proper, the Rajputs had practically disappeared before the Sikhs, the Pathans and the Balauchs. Under the Sikh rule observed Ibbetson, "the Rajput was over shadowed by the Jat who resented his superiority and his refusal to join him on equal terms in the rank of the Khalsa, deliberately persecuted him wherever and whenever he had the power and preferred his title of the Jat Sikh to that of the proudest Rajput."¹²⁵ The Rajputs were lazy and poor husbandmen, let out their lands to tenants. Only the poorest Rajputs tilled land. The Rajputs were Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Muslim Rajputs were called *ranghars*, were not good farmers as were Jats and Sainis.¹²⁶

The Arains, Kambohs and the Sainis were considered as good cultivators and only next to the Jats. Similarly, the Awans and the Gujars were regarded as fairly good cultivators but they ranked below the Jats, Arains and Sainis.¹²⁷ The Arains, well known for market gardening, were numerous in Jalandhar, Batala, Amritsar and Lahore. The Kambohs seldom engaged in market gardening, but they were no less industrious and skillful than the Arains. They formed one of finest cultivating communities in the Punjab. The Sainis took to gardening for market even more than the Arains but in addition to ordinary farming.¹²⁸

In the traditional socio-economic setup of the village society, the artisans played an important role. As the servants of village communities, they constituted an important part of the rural society. An average village in the early nineteenth century Punjab depended upon its artisans for its few simple wants, like its household vessels, cloth,

¹²⁴ Radha Sharma, *Peasantry and The State*, 84; Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Politics, Society and Economy*, 281.

¹²⁵ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 100; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 400.

¹²⁶ Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Politics, Society and Economy*, 281; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 519; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 400.

¹²⁷ Radha Sharma, *Peasantry and The State*, 84.

¹²⁸ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 23, 24; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 188, 201; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 480.

sugar, oil for food and for agricultural implements.¹²⁹ According to a rough estimate based on the early British census figures, the artisans formed nearly 20 per cent of the total population in the Punjab during the nineteenth century.¹³⁰ The term artisan refers to skilled handicraft that had inherited certain skills and worked in family groups or as individuals mostly in villages but also in towns and cities. They were generally identified by their castes that largely corresponded to their inherited skills. Important artisans from the point of view of their indispensability to society were the blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, potters, leather workers and the goldsmiths. They came from the lower strata of the society, but became an integral part of social structure of the village. Because of their functions and economic subservience to landowners in villages, the artisans were called *kamins* or menials and were universally considered socially low. In Hindu *varna* system, the artisans were treated at par with clean *sudra*. While the leather workers were considered as untouchable.¹³¹

The artisans were not employed by any particular family; they were attached to the entire community. Their manufacturing activities and agricultural production were complimentary to each other. They manufactured agricultural implements, clothes and provided services and in return received a certain share of crops under the arrangement synonymous to the traditional system called *sepidari* in the Punjab. *Sep* system operated without much exchange of cash. The *kamins* were remunerated generally in kind at the time of harvest in return for the work.¹³² Their payment was called *haquq-i-kamiana* or *haq-sep*, which generally absorbed 10 to 15 per cent of the total produce of the village. On social ceremonies like marriages and births in their patron's house, the artisans were expected to perform certain specialized and ceremonial services for which they were entitled to a fee known as *lag* and were thus called *lagis* on these occasions.¹³³

¹²⁹ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (eds.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, 179.

¹³⁰ Harish.C.Sharma, "Artisans of the Punjab"(eds.) J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, 177.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 178-179.

¹³² Hereditary relationship between agricultures and village artisans and other menial under which the latter got fixed share of crops called *sepidari* system. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab: A Study of the Social Change in Historical Perspective (1849-1947)*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1996, 13-14; P.S. Jammu, *Changing Social Structure in Rural Punjab*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1974, 6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 181.

There were numerous artisans both superior and inferior. Among them *sunar* (goldsmith), *tarkhan* (carpenter), *lohar* (blacksmith), *kumhar* (potter) and *julaha* (weaver) were regarded as clean and *chamar* (leather worker) and *mochi* (shoe maker) as unclean artisans.¹³⁴ Whether Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, the 'clean' artisan castes were broadly treated at par with the *sudra* of Hindu *varna* system. On account of relatively 'clean' nature of their work, the castes of *sunar*, *tarkhan*, *lohar* and *kumhar* were considered superior among the artisans. The *julahas* were regarded as lower among the 'clean' castes. Leatherworkers and shoe-makers, who worked in leather, were considered the lowest in fact, untouchables.¹³⁵

The artisans were not directly involved in agricultural operations. The *julahas* and the *sunars*, were paid either on daily wage basis or by the job. The most important among the artisans were those whose assistance in agricultural operations was vital like the *tarkhans*, *kumhars*, *sunars* and *chamars*. The *julahas* and *telis*, however, were called upon to assist during the reaping season and were paid for separately. The *chamars*, *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *mochis* and *kumhars* were hired during both the sowing and reaping seasons to work as field labourers. The agriculturists who patronized their services were called *jajmans* and the system was known as the *jajmani* system. The carpenters and potters were called *vade kamins* or superior while the blacksmiths and shoemakers were the *loude kamins* or inferior.¹³⁶

The *tarkhans* generally made and mended wooden implements of agriculture for which they received customary payment in kind from the cultivators. They manufactured and repaired ploughs and furnished handles of sickles and spades once in a year. They also made household furniture and articles for daily use which consisted mostly of the cots (*charpoys*) and low square stool (*pihri*) and the spinning wheel (*charkha*). However for making carts, Persian wheels and sugarcane presser, they received additional payment in cash or kind.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 27; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 266-67.

¹³⁵ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 27; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 520.

¹³⁶ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 29; Himandri Banerjee, "The Kamins of the Punjab", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1977, 287.

¹³⁷ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 313; J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 25; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 29.

The *kumhars* as they were most often called in the Punjab, *gumiars*, were the potters and the brick burners. They were true village artisans, receiving customary dues, in exchange for which they supplied all earthen vessels needed for household use and earthenware pots, called *tind*, used for drawing water from Persian wheel. They were alone of all Punjab castes who kept donkeys. At the time of marriage ceremonies *ghumiars* brought pots and earthen wares for the dowry of their client's daughter. They were the petty carriers of the villages and towns. They were employed to carry dust, manure, bricks and the like. They also helped in carrying the agricultural produce to the market on their donkeys.¹³⁸

The *lohar* furnished and repaired iron implements like the *datri* (sickle), *hal* (plough), *kahi* (spade), *kohara* for boiling sugar cane juice and several other metal wares used by agriculturists. The cost of the raw materials for new implements was borne by the owners but the blacksmith had to furnish iron for repair work.¹³⁹

The *mochis* supplied shoes, leather thongs, blinders for bullocks, harnesses and whips. The word *mochi* is properly the name of an occupation and signifies the worker in tanned leather as distinguished from the tanner.¹⁴⁰ Besides these artisans, other artisans were *raj* (masson), *julaha* (weaver), *chhimba* (calico printer), *dhobi* (washerman), *darzi* (tailor), *penja* (cotton carder), *tehi* (oil presser), *jhiniwar* (water carrier), *kalal* (distiller of wine), *machhi* (fisherman), *bhatyara* (baker), *mallah* (sailor or boatman) and *lilari* (dyer). They also received fixed share of the produce. On the marriage occasion *darji* sew the clothes of the whole family of bride and bridegroom and *tehi* extracted oil from oil seeds and also served as torchbearer (*masalchis*).¹⁴¹ A *jhiniwar* also called *kahar* or *mehra*, was water carrier and basket-maker. He carried palanquins and loads in a *bhangi*. He supplied water in the houses as well as in the fields. If he carried water in skin he was called *saqqa* or *mashki*, and if in earthen or

¹³⁸ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 315; J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 25; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 30; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 210.

¹³⁹ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 309; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 30; Himandri Banerjee, "The Kamins of the Punjab", 294.

¹⁴⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 26; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 30; Abse J.A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1973, 64.

¹⁴¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 520; Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 63; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 210.

Social Structure

brass vessels a *kahar*. A *kahar* was Hindu and *maskki* a Muslim. A *kalal* was distiller and seller of spirituous liquors. He was found in large number in areas populated mostly by Sikhs. A *dhobi* or washer man was a true village worker as he received a fixed share of the produce in return for washing clothes of villagers. He kept an ass for carrying clothes to house and from the *ghat*. A dyer or *lilari* coloured garments of the people. A *chhimba* stamped coloured patterns on cotton fabrics. He dyed in madder and in no other colour. A *pinja* or *dhunia* was a cotton-scutching to fill in quilts. He had a flourishing business in winter.¹⁴²

At the lower rung of the social structure in the Punjab stood scavenger classes, very essential for village and town economy. The *chuhra* or *bhangi* was the sweeper and scavenger par excellence of the Punjab, were found throughout the province and most numerous in the Lahore and Amritsar. Among their manifold duties were sweeping of houses and cattle sheds, collection and patting of cattle dung into cakes. Agricultural labour was also performed by them. They were one of the village menials proper who received a customary share of the produce. News of death was communicated to a friend or relative through *chuhra*.¹⁴³

Among the Sikhs, they were known as *mazbis* and *rangretas*. *Mazbi* means nothing more than a member of the scavenger class converted to Sikhism. They venerated Guru Teg Bahadur, wore long hair and abstained from tobacco. The conversion to Sikhism had little improved their social status.¹⁴⁴ The *mazbi* took the *pahul*, apparently refused to touch night soil though performing all the other works hereditary to the *chuhra* caste. The Sikh *chuhra* made fine soldiers and were extensively enlisted in Khalsa army.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 520.

¹⁴³ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 293; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 64; P.N. Chopra, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1976, 248.

¹⁴⁴ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 293; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 64; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 404-405; Ethne K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, Heritage Publication, New Delhi, 1976, 19.

¹⁴⁵ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 293; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 521; E.K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, 250.

The Sikh *chamars* were called *ramdasia*, after the name of Guru Ram Das, who had invited them to join Sikh religion.¹⁴⁶ Among Muslims they were known as *musalis*.¹⁴⁷ They served the village society through their specialized skill in tanning and dyeing of hides of the dead cattle and by supplying foot wears and various other articles of leather required for agricultural and household purposes and for harnessing.¹⁴⁸ They were expected also to work on *begar* or labour without additional remuneration. *Begar* included performing services for visiting dignitaries to the village, carrying their luggage from one place to another, plastering the mud-houses and keeping the village guest house (*janj ghar*) in good shape. They left leather-work for weaving.¹⁴⁹

The category of professional servants called *lagis* formed quite a useful part in the social and cultural life in the cities as well as in the countryside. Foremost among them was *nai* or barber. His occupation was menial one. In addition to his professional chores of haircutting, shaving and shampoo the villagers, served tobacco at the village rest house and attended the guests, he enjoying the important function of go-between for arranging betrothals. He was the hereditary bearer of important messages such as news of auspicious events, formed congratulations and fixation of marriage dates from one village to another. The *nai* together with Brahman, would act as a go-between in the negotiations preceding a betrothal or settled terms for match making.¹⁵⁰ He completed some formalities during wedding ceremonies. The ceremony of *watna* and *navai-dhuvai* in bridegroom's house was conducted by him. Much in the same way his wife (*nain*) was required to accompany the bride to her in-

¹⁴⁶ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 297; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 58,59; Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 405; Sunita Mahajan, *The Chamars of Punjab (1849-1947)*, Unpublished M.Phil, Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 48, 49.

¹⁴⁷ E.K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, 250, 252.

¹⁴⁸ Harish C.Sharma, "Politicization of The Punjabi Chamars", *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1983, 128.

¹⁴⁹ Bruce Caldwell, *The Jajmani System An Investigation*, Hindustan Publishing Co., Delhi, 1991, 92; Harish C.Sharma, "Politicization of The Punjabi Chamars", 130; Himandri Banerjee, "The Kamins of the Punjab", 303.

¹⁵⁰ *Trai lagi shagan liye, bhat, purohat te nai*. Three messengers' bard, *purohit* and barber brought the *shagan*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh, 19; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century (1857-1947)*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1963, 79; E.K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, 177-178.

law's house after the wedding.¹⁵¹ The *nai* was commonly addressed as Raja in order to give him a high status. At the weddings he had a place of honour second only to the Brahman. He was also a leech and village surgeon, and among Muslims performed the ceremony of *sunnat* or circumcision.¹⁵² Notwithstanding all this, the *nai* was essentially *kamin* or village servant of much the same social standing as the *dhobi*, far above the *chamar* but somewhat below the *lohar*, for his occupation as a *nai* proper was considered degrading.¹⁵³

A *nai* was Hindu in Hindu populated areas, called *nai*, Muslim in Muslim areas, known as *hajjam*. A Sikh barber was called *naherna*. The barber formed a highly organized occupational caste which was divided into a complex system of social groups, varying in different parts of the Punjab, but mainly on the lines of Brahman or Khatri organization.¹⁵⁴

The entertaining classes were very essential part of the social structure. These classes consisted of persons who followed specialized professions for the amusement of people, young and old in villages, towns and cities. Among them, there were traditional genealogists, bards or folk singers. The *bhats* and *charans* were Hindu genealogist who recited the history of the ancestors of their patrons on the festive occasions. They were par excellence genealogist of the Rajputs and Brahmans, though they performed the same office for Jats. They admitted themselves from Brahman origin. The *bhats* were almost Hindus, even where their clients were Muslims.¹⁵⁵

Dums and *mirasis* generally performed similar functions like the *bhats*. But they were more genealogists as they were skilled singers and musicians. They acted as bards, buffoons, genealogists, musicians and minstrels. They possessed an admirable

¹⁵¹ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh, 19; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, 33; Daljinder Singh Johal, "Literary Evidence on Social Structure in the Punjab (1750-1850)", *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 59-60.

¹⁵² Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 63; E.K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, 178.

¹⁵³ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 230; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 55-56.

¹⁵⁴ J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 26; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 521.

¹⁵⁵ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 231-34; Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 21.

fund of ready wit, jokes and anecdotes, to amuse their clients. They visited the houses of all the people in the village once a year. At the weddings they recited the history, praised ancestors and genealogy of the bridegroom. If they were assured of good fees, they showered compliments on them and their ancestors. If they were not properly treated, they exposed the long-forgotten scandals of the family. They attended weddings and funerals. The *dums* were generally Hindu and were scattered throughout the Punjab especially in Amritsar and Lahore.¹⁵⁶

The *mirasi* was always a Muslim. The word *mirasi* was derived from the Arabic *miras* or inheritance. The word *mirasi* in Punjabi language had come to mean witty and funny in an overdone, vulgar manner. The *mirasis* beat drums and played the *shehnai* (flute) with a trumpet end at weddings and other auspicious occasions, but their speciality was wit. They would come to weddings and other gatherings invited and uninvited and begin to poke fun at guests and hosts alike. Their wit was inherited down the generations and practiced from childhood. It was sharp, very quick and at times brilliant.¹⁵⁷ Their wives, called *dumnis* and *mirasans*, did not lag behind. Particular on marriage occasions, they amused the gathering by their abusive and filthy songs (*sithnian*), intended to be a joke with wedding guests.¹⁵⁸ By virtue of their sharp memory and regional knowledge *mirasis* knew the family backgrounds of the area. And on that account they were often deputed along with *nais* and Brahmans for conducting nuptials. In this context an astute *dum* and *bhat* would create good impression in favour of his patrons. Therefore, very much like the other *lagis*, they were rewarded with customary gifts.¹⁵⁹

Some *mirasis* played upon *rabab*, a musical instrument, were known as *rababis*. They recited hymns from the holy Granth.¹⁶⁰ They wore long hair and dressed like the Sikhs. The *dhadis* also belonged to this category. They sang ballads in festive gatherings. They did so mostly in pairs, one playing the tabor (*dhad*) while the

¹⁵⁶ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 21; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 234.

¹⁵⁷ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 80.

¹⁵⁸ Daljinder Singh Johal, "Literary Evidence on Social Structure in the Punjab", 66.

¹⁵⁹ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 19; Daljinder Singh Johal, "Literary Evidence on Social Structure in the Punjab", 66.

¹⁶⁰ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 234; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 522.

other a kind of violin (*sarangi*). They recited the history or martyrdom of the great heroes and war songs.¹⁶¹

Another category of professional entertainers consisted of vagrants. They were actors and buffoons, wandered about with their families settling for a few days or weeks at a time in the vicinity of a large village or town. Among them *nats* and *bazigars* were the most important. They performed acrobat's feats and subsisted on the voluntary contribution obtained from the people. *Bazigar* was a Persian word meaning "he who does *bazi*" or any sort of game or play, but it was applied only to jugglers and acrobats. The *bazigar* was also a tumbler and the *nat* a rope dancer. Among the *nats*, only the males performed, while among the *bazigars* both males and females performed.¹⁶² The *bhand* or *naqqal* was the story teller, joker and buffoon and often called *basha*. The name comes from the Hindi *bhanda* 'buffooning'. The word *bhand* in Punjabi is synonymous with clown. At weddings and parties they gave traditional performance or improvised skits on the present company. They were ingenious in both humour and farce and never performed anything serious or classical.¹⁶³

A *bahrupia* was an actor or a mimic, and assumed many forms of character. The *bahrupia* is its origin a purely occupational term; it is derived from the Sanskrit *bahu* 'many' and *rupa* 'form'. His speciality was to disguise himself and act a role in such a realistic manner that people did not suspect it to be playacting. He might arrive at party as an old toothless hag, and no one would know until the end, when he suddenly threw away his grab and declared that he was a *bahrupia*.¹⁶⁴ A *qalandar* was a monkey man. He was seen leading bears, monkeys and other performing animals. The sound of his *dugdugi* attracted children and people to see his feats and he got grain and money as his fee. He was always a Muslim. Snake charmers were called *saperas*. They inherited the art of snake catching from their fore-fathers. They played upon *bin* in the jungle and snakes were attracted to them. While catching a snake they

¹⁶¹ Daljinder Singh Johal, "Society in Punjabi Literature" (ed.) Indu Banga, *Five Punjabi Centuries*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1997, 414.

¹⁶² Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 234; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 522.

¹⁶³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 81.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, 522.

took a solemn vow to release it after a certain period and this vow was religiously kept. They kept themselves immune to venom by applying the juice of herb, the name of which was never disclosed outside their tribe. They entertained the masses by the dance of their cobras to the tune of *bin* and by displaying different kinds of snakes.¹⁶⁵

In retrospect, we may say that there was structural and functional continuity from the Mughal times. Though there was structural and functional continuity it needs to be emphasized that the new ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore was by and large Punjabi. They came amongst the social groups that were evaluated relatively low in the social hierarchy in the late eighteenth century. Besides the Jat Sikhs, there were other classes and communities like the Barbers, Brahmans and Khatri now part of the ruling class. Exclusiveness of the old political elites of the Mughal times was now a thing of the past. At the religious level, Brahmans, *mullas*, *bhais*, *sheikhs* and *sufis* dominated the social, religious and cultural life of the people. The economy of the Punjab was run by traditional trading communities in which Khatri, Aroras and Banias occupied prominent place. They received special favours even from the state. From the functional point there were adjustments or continuities in the traditional social structure of the Punjab. Artisans and menials formed essential part of the village society. Without their support the village economy could not run smoothly. Though they belonged to lower strata of the society but their labour was a necessity for society. Among their manifold duties, sometimes agricultural labour was also performed by them. Entertainment of the people was done by special entertainer classes consisted of persons who followed specialized professions for the amusement of people. Their minds were full of witty jokes and humour.

¹⁶⁵ H.R.Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 523.

CHAPTER- III

POSITION OF THE WOMEN

Woman might be described as an adult female of the human race, a wife, a sister, a mother, a daughter and a mistress. Woman is an important member of society. In fact no society is complete without female members. The traditional social order is dominated by the patriarchy in social, economic and political spheres. Woman is always to follow the directions from the above that is the patriarchy. Theoretically, her position is in contrast with the concept of equating woman with Shakti or Lakshmi. Hindu sacred texts give exalted status to a woman by saying, “the gods live where women are worshipped”.¹ Woman is treated with great reverence and tenderness.² In Sikhism, the womenfolk are honoured as the symbol of domestic harmony, happiness, social cohesion and unity. The Sikh Gurus pleaded for full rights to woman. They advocated equal status for woman with man in all spheres of life. Guru Nanak Dev said in ‘asa di var’

*"From women is our birth. In the
women's wombs are we shaped.
Women are our friend and from
women is the family. If one
woman dies, we seek another.
Through women are the bonds of
the world. O, why call woman
evil, who gives birth to kings".³*

Theoretically, the woman is accepted as a basic unit of the society. But there is another profile of woman, she was believed to be fickle, fragile, sensuous, a

¹ S.C. Dube, *Indian Society*, National Book Trust, India, 1990, 106; A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi, 1962, 318.

² J.S. Grewal, *Lectures on Sikh History, Society and Culture of the Punjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, 335.

³ *Adi Granth*, Raga Asa, M.I. 473; Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, 174; C.L. Narang, *Women in Medieval India*, Navbharat Prakashan, Patiala, 1986, 60.

temptress, given to falsehood, folly and regarded as the root of all evils.⁴ The decline in her position from ancient times was most striking feature. Woman was considered inferior to man. She was never considered fit for independence at any stage of her life. This subordination was reflected even in her best virtues. For instance Hindu wife was expected to be completely devoted and dedicated to her husband. In certain situations, she obtained the supreme virtue of conjugal fidelity at the cost of her life.⁵ The patriarchy part of Hindu society expects several virtues in a woman. The first among them is chastity. Before marriage a woman should not think of any man in sexual terms and after marriage, no man other than her husband. She was under the care of her parents, as a daughter, under the order of her husband after marriage and totally dependent on her son after becoming a widow. The home was considered to be the most important place for woman. A woman who stayed at home has always given preference: “*andar baithi lakh di, bahar gayi kakh di*” (who stays at home is worth a lakh, who wanders out is worth a straw). Another proverb also reflected the importance of home for a woman, “*tre kam kharab mard nu chakki, sandhe nu gah, ran nu rah*” (three things are bad: grinding for a man, threshing for a buffalo and travelling for a woman).⁶

A woman was mainly confined to home and domestic career. She performed multifarious duties including the grinding of corn, milking the cows and buffaloes, churning butter, cooking food, fetching water and spinning cotton.⁷ Though she had a paramount influence in the household by controlling everything, even then she was treated as an inferior sex. When a husband and wife walking together she had to follow at a respectful distance behind. A good wife was expected to dedicate herself spiritually and physically to her husband. His gratification was her ultimate goal.⁸

⁴ Bhupinder Kaur, *Status of Women in Sikhism*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 2000 ; S.C. Dube, *Indian Society*, 106

⁵ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Publication Bureau, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1969, 55.

⁶ G.S.Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, (1849-1901), Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1962, 84; Bhagat Singh, “Condition of Women in the Punjab in the Early Nineteenth Century”, *Panjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, 361.

⁷ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 50; Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India, 1526-1748*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1967, 130.

⁸ A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Oriental Publisher, Delhi, 1973, 339; R.M. Dass, *Women in Manu and His Seven Commentators*, 166.

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In the patriarchal society, the birth of a girl was regarded as misfortune. Expression of sorrow indicated on the birth of a girl. While the birth of a son was welcomed in the family, being a permanent economic asset and protector of the family. This attitude could be due to the difficulty of girl's parents in arranging marriage, finding suitable husband, having to spend a lot of money on her marriage and also because a woman being economically dependent on man. A woman was expected to produce sons to continue the lineage because a son was believed the real maintainer of a race.⁹ Some matrimonial rituals like *til-khelna* (sesame game) and *dewar godi mein beithana* (younger brother of bridegroom seated in the bride's lap) signified that the bride should have sons.¹⁰ A lady who unfortunately happened to give birth to girls in succession was despised and condemned by her husband and family and there was constant fear that her husband might bring a second wife. A mother looking after her daughters was compared to that keeping a lamp made of flour: "*ate da diwa bahar rakhan tah kan ghinn vanjan, under rakhan tan chuhe khawan*" (if you put these outside, crows fly off with them, if you keep these indoor, rats eat them).¹¹

The fact that girl considered to be social and economic liability by her parents in particular and the society in general, the practice of female infanticide crept in. This practice was highly irreligious and sinful and mainly prevalent in the upper classes of society including Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. This practice was associated particularly with the Rajputs and was also among Khatri, Bedis, Sodhis, Jats and Sayyids.¹² Among the Hindus the idea prevailed that the marriage of a girl in another family brings inferiority. The general belief among them was that a daughter should marry only to their equal or their superior. A devout Hindu believed that if his

⁹ Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society" (ed.) Mohinder Singh, *History and Culture of Punjab*, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1988, 238; Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals (1707-1759)*, New Academic Publishing Co., Jullundur, 1972, 260.

¹⁰ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, (ed. J.S. Sital), Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1963, 81; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, Harman Publication, New Delhi, 1983, 90; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Society*, Ph.D Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 290.

¹¹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 84; Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society", 239.

¹² B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, V.V.R.I., Hoshiarpur, 1977, 411; Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, 70; B.S. Nijjar, "Women and Social Slavery in the Punjab", *Journal of Indian History*, Department of History, Kerala University, Trivandrum, Vol. L VI, 488.

daughter grew up to puberty in his house without getting married, many of his generations would be damned. The only easy solution was the killing of the new born girl.¹³

Female infanticide was strictly prohibited in Sikhism. The Sikh Gurus raised a voice against this practice. They considered it to be a culpable crime and was taken in a bad taste in Sikhism.¹⁴ In this regard Macauliffe states, “the Sikh Gurus resolutely set themselves against this practice. At the time of administration of the *pahul*, one of the obligations imposed on neophytes is not to kill their daughters and to avoid all association with those who do”.¹⁵ Guru Gobind Singh laid down five negative injunctions to be obeyed; one of the injunctions was to have no dealing with those who kill their daughter, “*kurimaran te narimaran naal koi samband na rakho*”.¹⁶

Different methods were adopted to put an end to the life of an infant girl. Stifling, poisoning and drowning were some methods of infanticide. As soon as the female child was born opium was administered to her. Sometimes a pill made of *bhang* was placed on the upper jaw of the infant’s mouth where it became softened with the saliva and went into the body of the child causing her death. In some cases the naval string of a new born girl was placed in her mouth which causes suffocation as a result of which she expired.¹⁷ Sometimes mother’s breast was smeared with a preparation of the juice of the *dhatūra* plant or the poppy. The infant suck the milk along with the poison.¹⁸ In the Gujrat district, the practice was to bury the infant alive. In Jullundur district the methods most resorted to were starvation, or starvation followed by a glut of milk which caused severe colic, or exposed to the weather, but

¹³ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 75; D.L. Dewan, *Change in the Attitude of Jalandhar Doab Khatri Towards Female Infanticide Between (1846-53)*, Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, 221.

¹⁴ Bhupinder Kaur, *Status of Women in Sikhism*, 37.

¹⁵ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 1963, 71.

¹⁶ In Sikhism Bedis were generally known as *Kurimars*. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, 71; Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh, Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature*, 258.

¹⁷ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 75; Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, (ed. J.S. Sital), 95

¹⁸ John Cave Browne, *Indian Infanticide and Its Origin, Progress and Suppression*, W.H. Allen and Co., London, 1857, 108-109; B.S. Nijjar, “Women and Social Slavery in the Punjab”, 488.

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when hasty measures were desired the poor infant was placed in a large jar, the cover was put on and not removed till the child suffocated.¹⁹

The Bedis buried their girl child with a piece of *gur* (refined sugar) between her lips and a twist of cotton in her hand reciting the following couplet.

*"gurh khani, puuni katni,
app nah aaye, bhaiya ghali".²⁰*

(Eat jaggery and spin thread, don't come, send brother instead).

All these means were calculated to prevent respiration and cause instantaneous death. Nonetheless, it was obvious that a daughter was far less valued. She received hardly any attention from her parents. Society's common attitude towards girls was that of suffering. It was more obvious in Hindu families who believed that daughters did not belong to them as after their marriage, they would go to their husband's family.²¹ This evil became so widely prevalent that the parents thought of saving their honour by adopting early marriages of their daughters. Marriage was considered to be the ultimate goal for a girl. Strict caste rules did not allow a girl to remain in her parents home for a long time and if a girl stayed without marriage was considered inauspicious. A premature liaison of a girl was a social odium and a grown up unmarried girl was a source of pain for the parents. These factors seem to have contributed to the practice of the child marriage. Though there was no fixed limit for marriage, often the girls were married even before they had attained puberty.²² The approximate marriageable age was about three to ten. The girls were delivered (*muklawā*) to the in-laws until she attained puberty.²³ Little girls were trained for marriage at the time when they should have been playing with their dolls or *gudian patola*. Their game generally took the form of marriage between male

¹⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 80; *Gazetteer of Jullundhur District, 1883-1884*, 60.

²⁰ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 80; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 411; Bhagat Singh, "Condition of Women in the Punjab in the Early Nineteenth Century", 359.

²¹ Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society", 238.

²² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1982, 525; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 210.

²³ A.H. Bingley, *History, Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujars*, Ess Ess Publication, New Delhi, 1978, 78; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of the Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1988, 182.

and female dolls.²⁴ Child marriage began to be respected by the society. In the contemporary literature we found such examples. Agra Sethi in his *Var Haqiqat Rai*, described the marriage of Haqiqat Rai which was performed at the age of eight.²⁵ This custom also prevailed among the upper classes. Rani Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur was married at the age of three with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and her *muklawā* was sent at the age of six.²⁶

Marriage of a girl led her parents into financial debt as a lot of extravagance was expected by the boy's family. The problem of giving large dowry arose subsequently. Because of dowry system, a daughter was considered as an economic burden by her parents. Jewellery was the most important item in dowry as it was considered to be a security in times of crisis. The nature of dowry varied according to the economic standard and the social status of the parents. It consisted of presents like ornaments, clothes, furniture, animals, household articles and other articles of luxury.²⁷ Dowry was displayed in the courtyard to show their social and economic standard. In literature numerous examples were found. Waris Shah gave reference of Heer's dowry which consisted of various types of clothes and ornaments.

*“Jarhat sona bahu bhanti gahne, aan majud karaye-----
pehra palang, mariya roop da tile naal unaye-----
surmedaani sohe sandi, chann moti laye-----”*.²⁸

Dowry was prevalent among both rich and poor alike. We do get such references in *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, for instance, Rani Chand Kaur, wife of Kharak Singh brought the dowry consisting of horses, camels, fine garments, wonderful utensils of gold and silver, large sums in cash, ornaments, precious stones, some maid servants, a number of villages and towns.²⁹

²⁴ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 70; B.S. Nijjar, “Punjab Under the Later Mughals”, 271, 273, 274.

²⁵ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, Khalsa College Amritsar, 1946, 18.

²⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 29; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 537.

²⁷ Parkash Singh Jammu, “The Development of Dowry System in Punjab”, *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, 232.

²⁸ K.S. Kang, *Punjab Wich Qissa Hir Ranjha*, Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2004, 264.

²⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut –Tawarikh* (tr. Amarwant Singh, ed. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga), Daftar II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 118.

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Among the Hindus, dowry was considered as *stridhan* or woman's property but the reverse cannot be ruled out.³⁰ Muslims adopted another method of dowry called *mahr* or ante nuptial. Unlike the Hindu woman, a Muslim woman could retain *mahr* even after marriage.³¹ There was no distinction among the Muslims and the non-Muslims regarding the rules regulating the devolution and disposed of property.³² Indeed her economic position was very weak. She had no power to control or utilized the *stridhan* or wealth given to her by her family at the time of marriage.³³ The property whatever a married woman acquired whether by her own self exertions or otherwise belonged to her husband.³⁴ According to customary law of the Punjab women did not inherit a share of parental property.³⁵ A daughter was never gifted ancestral land without consent of male heirs. A widower daughter or a daughter who had been ousted by her husband and had returned to her father's house to live, had right to maintenance for life if she remained chaste and did not remarry. A widow had no right to alienate her estate. If at all she had to sell her property, it was subject to investigation in deciding whether it was necessary or not. After her death, the property reverted to her father's agnates.³⁶

After marriage, girl lived in joint family of her husband where she was under the control of her mother-in-law. Large number of restrictions was imposed on her. If she failed to come up to her mother-in-law's expectations, her life would become miserable in the family. She had to please all the members of her husband's family by doing every possible domestic service.³⁷ She had to observe *purda*, *ghund* or veil from her male family members and if she was to move out, she had to cover her face or body with veil. The veil had become a common feature of the society. If she went

³⁰ S.C. Dube, *Indian Society*, 108; Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society", 241.

³¹ Zarina Bhatti, "Status of Muslim Women and Social Change"(ed.) B.R. Nanda, *Indian Women from Purdah to Modernity*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, 100-102 ; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters, Under the Mughals*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1976, 199-120.

³² W.H. Rattigan, *A Digest of Civil Law for the Punjab, Chiefly Based on the Customary Law*, The University Book Agency, Allahabad, 1966, Preface XIV, 1.

³³ Harish C. Sharma, "Customary Law and Women in the Colonial Punjab" (eds. Reeta Grewal and Sheena Pall), *Precolonial and Colonial Punjab: Society and Economy, Politics an Culture*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2005, 225.

³⁴ Paras Diwan, *Custmory Law: on Punjab and Haryana*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1990, 213.

³⁵ Parkash S. Jammu, "The Development of Dowry System in the Punjab", Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, 232.

³⁶ Harish C. Sharma, "Customary Law and Women in the Colonial Punjab", 256-257.

³⁷ Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society", 240; Daljit Singh, *Punjab: Socio Economic Condition*, Commonwealth, Patiala, 2004, 104.

out without veil, was criticized in the family.³⁸ Women adopted *purda* as a protective measure to save their honour at the hands of the foreign invaders and to maintain the purity of their social order. Hindu and Sikh ladies used *dupatta* as a sign of their grace and respectful position.³⁹ Muslim ladies mainly observed *purda*. They had not move out without a veil which consisted of a *burqa* and hide them from head to foot. They were able to see others through the thin layer of a net but could not be seen by other people.⁴⁰

Purda was mainly confined to the upper strata particularly among the Rajput ladies. We get reference that wives of Maharaja Ranjit Singh especially, Rajput wives followed this practice. But there are some exceptional cases like Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who appeared unveiled in the battlefield as a commander of soldiers.⁴¹ Maharani Chand Kaur, widow of Kharak Singh came out in the Darbar, unveiled, wore a turban, donned male attire and rode on an elephant to inspect the parade of the army.⁴² Maharani Jind Kaur, widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, cast off her veil and played important role in the politics of Lahore Darbar.⁴³

Women of peasants and working classes did not wear *purda*. They were free from this bondage. They were expected to help their husbands in all external pursuits. They simply covered their head with *dupatta* or other head dress slightly over their face when they passed stranger. Hence, the common women moved much freely than the women of the upper strata.⁴⁴

The greatest tragedy in the life of a woman was death of her husband. After the death of her husband, she completely lost respect in society. Her life became more miserable and survival most painful. There were two ways open for her, either to spend the wretched life of suffering and pain where mental torture inflicted by society

³⁸ “*Saas nanana devneya taane, phirdi hai ghungat khuli*”. She roam about with uncovered face and her mother-in-law and sister-in-law passed sarcastic remarks. J.S. Sital, *Shah Hussian Jiwan te Rachna*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 79.

³⁹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 319, 480; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 55.

⁴⁰ M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals (1526-1700)* Chugh Publication, Allahabad, 1978, 88; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 109

⁴¹ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 134.

⁴² S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1964, 501; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 219.

⁴³ Avtar Singh Gill, *Lahore Darbar and Rani Jindan*, Central Publishers, Ludhiana, 1983, 86.

⁴⁴ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 172; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of the Hindustan Life*, 171.

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continued hammering her emotions, or to burn herself along with her husband's dead body. Unlike the Sikhs and the Muslims, widow remarriage was not permitted among the Hindus particularly the Rajputs. So burning alive with her deceased husband was preferable. The barbarous custom of burning was known as *sati*.⁴⁵ The custom of *sati* or self-immolation of widow on the pyre of her husband prevailed, to a certain extent among the Hindu families of high position particularly it was popular with the Rajputs. Among Rajputs *sati* was not taken as a curse but as a pride. They believed that "those who burnt in this way assert their reincarnation as Goddess in the heaven of Lord Vishnu."⁴⁶ When a woman intended to burn herself with her husband, her grief assumed a sublime character she shed no tears, made no lamentations, she laid aside her veil and no longer concealed her face from the public. The belief of entering heaven with her husband gave her incredible energy to dedicate herself to sacrifice.⁴⁷ In *sati*, woman saw hidden and symbolic meaning, the deep passionate joy of the sacrifice and the expression of love stronger than death. The *satis* were considered sacred and their last words were believed to be Prophetic, their blessings eagerly sought for and their curse dreaded.⁴⁸ Ganesh Das in *Char Bagh -i- Punjab*, placed the widow becoming *sati* above even the gnostic and the martyr. He depicts an interesting scene of a case of *sati*. The close relatives, accompanying the funeral pyre, were in tears, the women pulled their hair in mourning, the Brahmans struck gongs and the common people were struck with wonder and awe the respectable citizens garlanded the widow and made offering of cloth and gold and they bowed to her in reverence. The spot where this widow became *sati* became a place of worship.⁴⁹ In Gujrat, a small structure was raised as a place of worship in the commemoration of Radhi who performed *sati* along with his husband's dead body.⁵⁰ Steinbach, describes the custom of *sati* in Punjab as follows;

⁴⁵ Neera Darbari, *Northern Indian Under Aurangzeb*, 80. Bhagat Singh, "Condition of Women in the Punjab", 361.

⁴⁶ A.S. Alterkar, *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi, 1962. 131.

⁴⁷ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Whittakar and co. London, Vol. I, 1840, 82-83; Leopold Von Orlich, *Travels in India, Including Sind and Punjab*, Vol.I, 170.

⁴⁸ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 409.

⁴⁹ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, 56; J.S. Grewal, *Lectures on Sikh History, Society and Culture of the Punjab*, 335.

⁵⁰ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (eds.), *Early Nineteenth Century*, From Ganesh Das's, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, 154-155.

*“There exists no prohibition against the suttee. In all cases they are understood to be willing victims and much real or pretended dissuasion is exercised by the public functionaries and by friends and relations, to divert the miserable creature from her destructive intentions”.*⁵¹

In Sikhism, the custom of *sati* was strongly denounced. The word *sati* has been used in the *Adi Granth* in different connotations, it implies truthful, mortal, disciplined, virtuous, generous and pure etc. It also refers to the custom of *sati* by which a widow used to burn with her dead husband. Guru Amar Das strongly condemned the custom of *sati*. He was chiefly remembered for his vigorous crusade against this practice.⁵² He denounced the *sati* in the following words.

*“satian ehh na akhiye jo mariyan lag jalan,
Nanak satian janiye jo birhye chot maran”.*⁵³

(Not these are true *satis* that perish on their husbands funeral pyres: said Nanak, those are true *satis* as pass life in noble conduct and content, serve their lord and rising each day, remember him)

The practice of *sati* was commonly followed by the upper strata. It became common custom in Sikh aristocracy of Lahore Darbar. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's four wives – Rani Guddan, Rani Hardevi, Rani Raj Kaur and Rani Banali along with seven slave girls had resolved to burn themselves on his funeral pyre.⁵⁴ Dr. Martin Honigberger and Lieut Colonel Steinbach both attended the royal funeral and cremation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on 28th June, 1839. Honigberger gives detailed description as follow:

*The four Ranees came out of the zenana on foot
and unveiled for the first time of their lives. They*

⁵¹ Lt. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab: Being a Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1979, 66; Lepel Griffin *Ranjit Singh*, S. Chand and Co., Delhi, 1957, 66; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 409.

⁵² Indu Bhushan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, A Mukarjee and Co., Calcutta, 1963, 180; C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Languages Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970; 31. Kahan Singh, *Mohan Kosh*, 112.

⁵³ *Adi Granth*, *Raga Suhi*, M-3, 787; Bhupinder Kaur, *Status of Women in Sikhism*, 42.

⁵⁴ Kavi Gwal, *Vijay Vinod*, Shamsheer Singh (ed.), Shamsheer Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1971, 147.

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*distributed their ornaments and jewels while accompanying the funeral train in open palanquins, their seven slave girls followed them on foot. The royal body was respectfully placed in the middle of the pile. After that the Ranees ascended the fatal ladder, one by one, according to their ranks, the slave girls followed, and the minister (Raja Dhian Singh) showed himself very officious in affording them assistance. The Ranees placed themselves at the head of the royal body and the slave close to its feet. There they crowded, remaining in silent expectation for the fatal moment, when a thick mat of reeds being brought with which the whole was covered. Oil was then poured over the mat, the ministers and Sardars descended and the pile was lighted at each corner. In a few moments, the deplorable victims of an abominable and fantastic ceremony had ceased to exist.*⁵⁵

After Kharak Singh's death, out of his four widows only one Ishar Kaur along with her three slave girls became *sati*.⁵⁶ Two of Nau Nihal Singh's widows became *sati*.⁵⁷ With Raja Dhian Singh fifteen queens performed *sati*.⁵⁸ On the death of Raja Suchet Singh, thirteen widows and slave girls immolated themselves.⁵⁹ Two of the widows of Raja Hira Singh along with slave girls performed the ceremony of *sati*.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ J.M. Honigberger, *Thirty Five Years in the East and Historical Sketches Relating to the Punjab and Cashmere*, London/Calcutta 1852, 99-100; Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 486; Lt. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab*, 17-18; C.M. Oman Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India, Vishal Publishers, Delhi, 1972, 111-112;.

⁵⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 67; Lt. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab*, 24; Leopold Von Orich *Travels in India, Including Sind and Punjab*, 175; Lepel. H. Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore 1865, 325.

⁵⁷ Chand Kaur made ladies, who were to burn alive, take bath and washing their head and feet with perfume and other necessary things, decorated them with fine garments like velvet, bejewelled and plain ornaments added to them all the same and, making them ride in palanquins, brought them there. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 129; Lepel. H. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 66.

⁵⁸ Kavi Gwal, *Vijay Vinod*, Shamsheer Singh (ed.), 200.

⁵⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 52; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 409.

⁶⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 69.

Four of the widows of Jawahar Singh, the brother of Maharani Jindan, became *sati*.⁶¹ Thus the practice of *sati* was still in vogue with the nobles and upper classes of both Hindus and Sikhs till the middle of the 19th century.

The custom of *sati* was not observed by the lower sections. Among the Hindus, except Rajputs, widowhood was compulsory. The widow was required to live a life of self denial, self sacrifice and devotion to her husband's memory and to dedicate herself to the service of the remaining family members. Embellishments, laughter, music and coloured clothes were denied to her. The belief in fate and previous life was so firm and deep that the widows bore their misfortune with wonderful fortitude and showed no signs of grief and no ill will against anybody or society. A widow was treated like a servant, cook, nurse and house keeper. Everyone in the family had the right to be rude to her, order her to do odd jobs at odd hours and in return no one cared for her feelings.⁶²

Widow remarriage was strictly prohibited among the upper strata of Hindus. From Punjabi literature it is also evident that the Khatri ladies disliked and abhorred the idea of remarriage and they preferred to lead a hard life.⁶³ Rajputs abstained from remarriage because of their purity of blood. They refused to marry their widows with families of inferior social rank and preferred to the custom of *sati*.⁶⁴ Among the Muslims, Sikhs and lower Hindus, there was no religious tenet prohibiting widow remarriage. Widow remarriage in the Punjab was not a question of caste but of status within the caste. Thus Jats always allowed widow remarriage but families of high social standing and, locally, certain tribes disallowed it. Among certain Mohammedans castes, such as the Sayyids and Pathans, the rule existed, though not as an absolute prohibition.⁶⁵ Muslim widow remarried through usual *nikah* ceremony

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 75; Lepel. H. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 66.

⁶² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 525, 526; Kiran Devendra, "Position of Women in Punjabi Society", 240.

⁶³ Talsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti ti Khatrani Da* (ed.), Piara Singh, *Punjabi Jhagre*, Piara Singh Padam, Sardar Sahit Bhawan, Patiala, 1974, 74.

⁶⁴ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, B.R. Publishing Co., 1974, 127; Bindu Bala, "Social Stratification and Widows in the Colonial Punjab", *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University Patiala, 2006, 339.

⁶⁵ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 94.

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called *nikah sani*.⁶⁶ Jats, agricultural classes and artisans practiced widow remarriage through the ceremony called *karewa* or *chadar pauna* without any merry making and celebrations. Jat Sikh stood first in widow remarriage. A Jat father addressed his widow daughter thus: ‘come my daughter and be married, if this husband dies, there are plenty more’.⁶⁷ The *karewa* ceremony was not accompanied by any religious ritual. A white sheet was thrown over the widow’s head by a man which signifies his acceptance of her as his wife.⁶⁸ It was optional for the widow to marry either the eldest (*jeth*) or the youngest (*dewar*) brother of the deceased husband. The children of such marriage were regarded as a legal heir.⁶⁹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself married nine widows through this practice.⁷⁰ Prince Kharak Singh married a widow named Ishar Kaur by this practice who became *sati* on his death.⁷¹ Sher Singh also proposed Chand Kaur, widow of Kharak Singh to marry him by *karewa* but she resisted.⁷²

Though the practice of *karewa* and *nikah sani* prevailed in the society, most of the women preferred to maintain their fidelity even after the death of their husbands and abhorred the very idea of remarriage. Hindus and Sikhs were monogamous and take second wife if the first was barren or gave birth only to female children.⁷³ Polygamy was the privilege to some rich Muslims. The Quran permitted a Muslim to have four wives at a time, and laid down the strict condition that men, who marry another wife, would treat all his wives equally.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ K.M Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of the Hindustan*, 190; Sudarshan Singh, “The Position of Woman- Social Beliefs and Practices”, *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University Patiala, 2002, 283.

⁶⁷ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 103; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 526; Barjinder Kaur, *Jats in the Punjab*, M. Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 36.

⁶⁸ In the *karewa* ceremony the *lavan* was not performed. The both parties heads touch, ties some part of their clothes together by a knot and placed a *chadar* over them both. B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 392; Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 64.

⁶⁹ Out of *karewa* practices, the *threwa* form of marriage came into practices. In this practice widow did not agree to marry her deceased husband’s brother and marry out of the family. H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of Sikh Power in Punjab and Political life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, 164; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-1884*, 41; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 392.

⁷⁰ Rani Devi, Ratan Kaur, Daya Kaur, Chand Kaur, Mehtab Kaur, Saman Kaur and Gulab Kaur. Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 107; Balraj Sagar, *Who’s Who*, 71, 86, 132, 167, 251, 324, 344.

⁷¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 537; Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 65.

⁷² B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 220.

⁷³ M. P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals*, 90-91; Kiran Devendra, “Position of Women in Punjabi Society”, 241; Bhagat Singh, *Condition of Women in the Punjab*, 360.

⁷⁴ Zarina Bhatti, *Status of Muslim Women and Social Change*, 103; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 112.

Polygamy was fairly common among the kings and nobles who often found it as a useful instrument in strengthening their political power by contracting numerous matrimonial alliances. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's marriage with Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur was a political relationship resulting into the union of the two powerful *misl*s. This matrimonial alliance proved as a ladder by which Ranjit Singh climbed to greatness.⁷⁵ Kanwar Kharak Singh had four wives.⁷⁶ Polygamy created domestic unhappiness and immorality. The co-wives rivaled each other and used all devices to excel one another and thereby win the love of their husband. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's wife Rani Raj Banso committed suicide because he praised Moran in front of a slave girl. Rani Raj Banso felt hurt and committed suicide by poisoning herself.⁷⁷

Prostitution was regarded as a disgrace, social evil but was encouraged by the male members of the society. Though the practice of monogamy ruled over the ordinary man, some of them satisfied themselves with second rate women and girls called prostitutes. Prostitution, a typically urban institution, catered to people from various social and culture background. It seems that they had a recognized place and functions in the urban society and were not always treated with contempt or prudery.⁷⁸ Broadly, prostitutes were graded according to their skill and talent, as singing girls (*tawaiifs*), nautch girls, special courtesans and common prostitutes. Their ranks were constituted by the unwanted young widows of respectable upper caste Hindu families and the women brought or abducted from the hills and some other areas, including the villages.⁷⁹

Prostitutes who possessed beautiful face and figure, were below twenty and could sing and dance and obsessed seductive art was known as dancing girls. They were clandestinely visited by government servants (clerks and subordinate officers), rich landlords and others. On the top of them, there was the pick of physical beauty,

⁷⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 29; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A Mukerjee and Co., Calcutta, 15.

⁷⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 67; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 409.

⁷⁷ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 171; Gurcharan Singh, "Women in the Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *Punjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2002, 59-60.

⁷⁸ Indu Banga, "Urban Profile in The Pre-Colonial Punjab", Presidential Address, *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011, 16; Victor Jacquemont and A. Soltyskoff, *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago* (ed. H.L.O. Garrett), The Punjab Government Record Office, Monograph No.18, Lahore, 1935, 27.

⁷⁹ Indu Banga, "Urban Profile in The Pre-Colonial Punjab", 16-17.

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everything symmetrical, sweet voice and delicate hands and feet. Jacquemont give a vivid and bold description of their physical appearance as follows:

*“They are fair enough; that is to say of a deep pallor with no more colour in their cheeks than in the rest of their faces. They are all very small, with good features and breasts, but their arms are too thin, their thigh thinner still, and their legs so thin as to be actually unsightly; their eyes, naturally beautiful, have an added brightness and softness from the custom of slightly darkening the lower eye-lid with a preparation of antimony”.*⁸⁰

Only the kings, princes and ministers could afford them. Rich people some times maintained their own dancing girls.⁸¹ A man who enjoyed her music, dance and body paid her. The charges of a woman of common place features and colour and who had passed the meridian of life were one rupee, or even less in those days. A pretty woman in her twenties charged from one to two rupees. Their customers were villagers and poor people of towns and cities.⁸²

The harem of Maharaja Ranjit Singh comprised forty six women belonging to four categories. In the first category were nine whom he married in the orthodox Sikh manner. The second category also consisted of nine, all of them widows, whom he married through *karewa* practice. To the third category belonged seven courtesans. All these categories enjoyed the status of queens. Not so the fourth category which consisted of concubines.⁸³ Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a large number of dancing girls for his own entertainment as well as for his European visitors. He had the ‘rarest beauties’ in his court.⁸⁴ They possessed enchanting beauty, sweet smiles, melodious voices, bewitching movements and were fully trained in the art of seduction.⁸⁵ Such royal dancing girls enjoyed many privileges. On festive occasions, they performed

⁸⁰ H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, 27.

⁸¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 563.

⁸² *Ibid.* 563; G.S.Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab 1849-1901*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1962, 87-88.

⁸³ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 169.

⁸⁴ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 310; Victor Jacquemont, *Letters From India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere During the Years, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831 Under the Order of the French Government*, Edward Churton, London, 1834, Vol. I, 391.

⁸⁵ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1970, 85-86; G.S.Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 86.

dance and received handsome rewards in cash and kind.⁸⁶ Some of them enjoyed large *jagirs* and pensions. Moran, a dancing girl, was given a revenue free grant in Pathankot.⁸⁷ Even a bridge was constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in her name

known as *pul kanjari*.⁸⁸ He had established matrimonial alliance with the dancing girls named Moran and Gul Bahar Begam.⁸⁹ Moran had a great influence over the Maharaja and money was coined the inscription of *mor* (peacock) on it in commemoration of the marriage. The Maharaja performed pilgrimage to Hardwar, accompanied with her.⁹⁰ His marriage with Moran caused a stir among the orthodox Sikhs and was summoned to the Akal Takht and was awarded the punishment of a hundred lashes.⁹¹

The dancing girls and prostitutes had no social status, no respect in the society. They were considered as social evil and responsible for the growth of moral laxity in the society. But prostitution was a recognized institution in the society and dancing girls were never exposed to any insult.⁹² They lived in separate areas. In Amritsar *bazaar-i-kanjran* and *bazaar-i-Mughlan* were famous places for prostitutes. In Lahore *hira mandi* was famous and colourful area for them. *Hira mandi* by day was quite and deserted but after the sun went down it came into a dazzling and brilliant life. As the

⁸⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 170-171; Daftar III (IV-V), 79.

⁸⁷ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 575; Gulcharan Singh, "Women in the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", 58.

⁸⁸ Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited Amritsar frequently on religious occasions. For reaching Amritsar he used to start his journey from Lahore one day in advance. He used to camp for the night near village Dhanoa beside the canal. Moran, a dancing girl performed danced at the *baridari* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh between Lahore and Amritsar. Her village, Makhanpur, was not far from the *Baradari*. Once she was coming from her village on horse and lost one of her silver sandals in the canal which was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to carry the waters of the Ravi to Lahore to irrigate the Shalimar gardens. Moran was furious at losing the sandal. The pair of sandals had been a present from the Maharaja. She was disappointed at the loss of the slipper and apparently had lost other items into the canal or was inconvenienced while crossing it. She refused to perform before the Maharaja again - until he built a bridge across the canal. The Maharaja immediately ordered to be built a bridge over the canal. She asked the Maharaja to name that bridge *kanjari* bridge so that the coming generations remain aware of how this was constructed and this bridge is known as *pul kanajri* (bridge of the dancing girl). Joginder Singh Karon, *Tales Around Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 78-79.

⁸⁹ Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 108; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839)*, 184.

⁹⁰ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 173; Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, 108-109.

⁹¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 35.

⁹² H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, 27.

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evening darkened, lights began to go up in the houses and *balconies* and the girls took their appointed places.⁹³ In Jalandhar prostitutes and their associates lived in five different *muhallas* located on the sides. There was a small courtesan's lane in Gujrat.⁹⁴ The leading singing girls lived in luxurious homes and enjoyed a measure of respectability. Their names usually carried the courteous suffixes of *begum* or *banu*, and if they were Hindus, as they sometimes were *bai*. They were frequently invited out to wedding and other functions.⁹⁵

Slavery was very common among the women of the Punjab, nearly all the concubines and their servants were slave. In the *zenanna* of General Ventura, observed Jacquemont, the ladies were being guarded and attended by female slaves, bought for from the hills. Interestingly, it was uncommon among the men.⁹⁶ The highest families sold off their slave girls when they considered them of little use or when they could strike a good bargain.⁹⁷ The sale and purchase of girls and women was called *bardah faroshi*. A special class of people carried on this profession. They were called *kanjars* or pimps. If a girl refused to become a harlot, she was chained in wooden fetters, thrown inside a dark cell and left without water and food. For her obstinacy she was put to death. Prostitution was started at the age of ten.⁹⁸

Amritsar and Lahore were the great centers of slave trade.⁹⁹ Dancing girls and prostitutes were exported and imported. Punjabi women were exported to Sind, in which province the paucity of female was very marked. Women were carried from Himalayan and sub-montane districts in Punjab. Sometimes they were daughters or near relatives of dancers and their education for their profession usually began at the age of five years.¹⁰⁰ This traffic was assigned to the scarcity of women, to the difficulty and expense attendant on the regular negotiations required for obtaining a wife within the caste, especially if the first wife had died and to the restrictions imposed by Hindu custom on marriage within certain *gots*. The purchasers of women were mainly Jats (both Sikh and Hindu), Aroras or Kirars and in a less degree,

⁹³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 184-185.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*; Indu Banga, "Urban Profile in The Pre-Colonial Punjab", 16.

⁹⁵ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 186.

⁹⁶ H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, 34-35.

⁹⁷ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 564.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 564-565.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 565.

¹⁰⁰ G.S.Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 86, 87.

Kambohs and Khattris.¹⁰¹ Jacquemont visited Kashmir in 1831 wrote that Kashmir had been drained of its beauties, “all little girls who promised to turn out pretty, are sold at eight years of age, and carried off into the Punjab and India. Their parents sell them from twenty to three hundred francs____ most commonly fifty to sixty”.¹⁰² Europeans also bought Kashmiri girls. General Ventura had fifty concubines.¹⁰³ Later he had fallen in love with a Muhammadan dancing girl named Kaulan whom he refused to marry.¹⁰⁴

In spite of above mentioned position of women in the society, there were few feminine characters that played a very significant part in influencing the course of history. The most obvious examples of such a turn of events was *mai* Anokhi, the widow of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, addressed as *mai sahiba*, and was held in high esteem by both Fateh Singh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She is said to have exercised considerable influence over the internal affairs of the Ahluwalia *misl*. There was some serious misunderstanding between Fateh Singh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She even helped them in sorting out that.¹⁰⁵ Raj Kaur, mother of Maharaja Ranjit Singh conducted the affairs of the Sukarchakia *misl* till her son became of age and assumed responsibilities.¹⁰⁶ *Mai* Sada Kaur as M’Gregor calls her, “one of the most artful and ambitious women who figure in Sikh history,”¹⁰⁷ who had played very prominent role in Lahore Darbar. She had the largeness of vision to conceive united Punjab under a single rule and she had the far-sightedness to identify the young son of her husband’s killer as potential ally in her scheme of the conquest and unification of all the warring and antagonistic *misls* that had been weakening the Khalsa. She, therefore, immediately took the boy Ranjit under wings and continued to push him to new pastures for a successful realization of her aim. Sada Kaur did not hesitate to marry her daughter to Ranjit Singh probably with an eye to the political advantage that

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰² Victor Jacquemont, *Letters From India: Describing a Journey in the British Dominion of India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere During the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, Undertaken by Orders of French Government*, Vol. II, 65.

¹⁰³ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 565.

¹⁰⁴ S.P. Singh, H.C. Sharma, *Europeans and Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, 2001, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Pratap Prabakar* (ed.) Joginder Kaur, Patiala, 1980, 38.

¹⁰⁶ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 7; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 22.

¹⁰⁷ M’Gregor, *History of the Sikhs: Containing the lives of the Gooroos, The History of the Independent Sirdars of Missuls and Life of Great Founder of the Monarchy, Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Vol. I, James Madden London, 1846, 152.

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might accrue from such a combination.¹⁰⁸ She rendered considerable help to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in consolidating his power. She actively participated in the politics of Lahore Darbar. Thus the first few years of Ranjit Singh's career were built through the shared efforts of Sada Kaur alongside his own.¹⁰⁹ Chand Kaur had entered the Sukarchakia family as the bride of Kharak Singh. However, by a curious turn of fortune, she lost both royal personages on the same day,¹¹⁰ which compelled her to make a bid for the throne on behalf of yet to be born heir of Nau Nihal Singh, carried by his young wife. Maharani Chand Kaur had succeeded in mobilizing the support of the Sandhawalia Sardars and many other chiefs.¹¹¹ Maharani Jindan, young wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, tried to anticipate the coming showdown with the British by inspiring the Khalsa army to have a test of their strength through an open encounter with them. As queen regent Jindan could, therefore, take the bold leap of trying to teach the British a lesson. In Punjabi literary source *Jangnama Singhan Wa Firangian Da*, by Shah Muhammad, Maharani Jindan's desire of revenge for her brother's murder has been blamed as the cause of the Anglo Sikh war of 1845-46.¹¹² She is remembered not for what she could achieve. She would remain closer to Punjabi hearts as the luminous minstrel of Punjabi aspirations.

Hence, the position and condition of woman in the society in conformity with the patriarchal framework was that of subordination. All decisions relating to her were taken by men in the family. Despite her many limitations, the authority of a woman in the household, both among rich and poor was very extensive. The management of the household was invariably in the woman's sphere. Only she had to decide as what her family shall eat. The fact that the woman grind corn and cooked food with her own hands, did not militate go against her superiority in household matters, such duties

¹⁰⁸ J.S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 24.

¹⁰⁹ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 134-139; Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Pratap Prabakar* (ed.) Joginder Kaur, 38; Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (ed.) Vol. II Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, 881.

¹¹⁰ Captain Leopold Von Orlich, *Travels in India*, Vol. I, London, 1845, 175; Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1967, 28.

¹¹¹ Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, Master Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, 30; S.M. Latif, *History of the Sikhs*, 501.

¹¹² Shah Muhammad, *Jangnama Shah Muhammad Arthat Angrezan te Singhan di Pehli Larai* (ed.) Kirpal Singh Kasel, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 105, 157; B.S. Nijjar, *Anglo Sikh Wars (1845-49)*, New Delhi, 1976, 70-119. Nijjar, *Maharani Jind Kaur*, K.B. Publications, New Delhi, 1975, 87; Avtar Singh, *Lahore Darbar and Rani Jinda*, Ludhiana, 1983, 86.

being looked upon as proper accomplishment for woman of all classes. The woman of lower classes had a substantial share in the economic pursuits of the domestic group. She may not wield the plough but contributed in diverse ways to agriculture. Woman in the family of artisan had well-defined roles in carrying out the traditional craft. Her contribution to the household economy, thus, cannot be ignored. Even woman was given equal opportunities in religious as well as in social affairs. Ceremonies and rituals in human life were almost performed by woman like *tel charauna*, *watna*, *dewar godi mein baithana*, *til kehlana*, *vaag pharai*, *surma pavai*, *pani varna* and *got khulana*. The marriage, too was, in fact, settled by women but the ultimate decision was taken by the men. In the wedding ceremonies, she was considered as a main centre of attraction. The woman had potentialities of controlling the entire household and in spite of her socially handicapped position, she had made herself indispensable in the social setup.

CHAPTER- IV

MATERIAL COMFORTS

Material comforts of the people of the Punjab during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century may refer to their houses or dwellings, their food and drinking habits, their dresses, ornaments and their general standard of living. It may be also presumed that there was a disparity between the income of various social classes and a big difference existed between the higher and lower classes. It will not be unfair to presume further that the domestic comforts of a large portion of the population of the Punjab during the period under study were not at variance with those of the conditions in the late nineteenth century. General standard of living of the people of Punjab conformed very largely to the standards of people elsewhere in India. Vera Anstey in *Economic Development of India* has commented that the houses of the people in the countryside were simple to the extreme. A house was made of mud bricks, plastered with a mixture of earth and cow dung. There used to be one or two cots besides a low stool called *pirah* in home in the name of furniture.¹ K.M. Ashraf's comment on the domestic comforts of the masses of people is a fairly correct general estimation of the village life where he states "masses of the people, most of whom inhabited in villages as they do now, did not require elaborate constructions. A few trunks and a quantity of straw for thatches is all they want for construction of their dwellings."²

Rural habitation was chosen generally on a raised ground where there was an easy availability of water and land for cultivation all around. The village was composed of houses and cottages adjoining one another, for the various classes, those of the untouchables or low classes lying on the outskirts. In the Punjab such houses were identified as *thattis* or *chamarhli*. An average house represented the minimum that human beings want for protection from cold, rain or tropical sun. Four mud walls enclosed a small space with a roof of thatch or branches and leaves. A small opening in the front wall was left out for entrance which might or might not be fitted with a door. The floor was trodden earth, sometimes plastered with cow dung.

¹ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab: A Study of the Social Change in Historical Perspective (1849-1947)*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1996, 31.

² K.M Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of the Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1988, 195.

For a man home (*ghar*) means a place where he spends his whole life and starts his family, where he feels secure and his family moves freely. There was a sense of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness attached with the direction and shape of a house or dwelling. A number of superstitions were connected with the construction of a house. For instance a house with the front narrower than the back is called *gau-mukha* or cow faced and is lucky; one with the front wider than the back is called *sher-dahan* or lion mouthed, is unlucky.³ A house was considered to be lucky which had an equal number of sides' preferably four, six or twelve. The one facing south was not considered auspicious. *Baisakh* (April-May) and *phagun* (February-March) months were considered lucky for house building. *Har* (May-June), *bhadon* (August-September), *asu* (October- November), *maghar* (January-February), *chet* (March-April) and *jeth* (May-June) were not considered lucky. Because *har* breeds mice; *maghar* produces debt; *magh* creates danger of fire; *chet* brings ill-luck and *jeth* brings loss of the money spent in building.⁴

The dwellings in villages were mostly constructed of unburnt bricks, single storeyed, rough and crude in construction and generally not more than 8 to 10 feet high. The houses were plastered with mud and cow dung, or more often the wall was build up somewhat irregularly by plastering cake over cake of mud the outer coating being mixed with chopped straw (*bhusa*) and cow-dung to make it bind. The roof was covered with branches and leaves, upon which mud was beaten, well plastered with earth mixed with chopped straw, and above all a cow-dung coating. It was made strong enough to bear a few people on it, and had raised edge all around with wooden gutter pipe to draw off water.⁵ The roof was used for storing heaps of *jowar*, fodder, and bundles of cotton twigs for roofing purposes, also for drying chilies, seed grains, etc., in the sun. The houses generally consisted of one or two small rooms, no opening and no windows badly ventilated. Although the walls and floors were rough and uneven, they had a light coloured appearance, from constant hand rubbing with a

³ G.S.Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab(1849-1901)*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1962, 47; A.H. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces of India*, Vol. I, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 913-914.

⁴ In Jalandhar district it meant house would generally remained empty. In Lahore a house facing South, or site on which a house facing South, could only be built has a markedly lower selling value. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces of India*, Vol. I, 910.

⁵ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 36-37; *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 33; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1982, 530.

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mixture of light clay and cow dung. There was no light in the rooms but light came in at the open door or through the clinks of it, when closed such a complete shutting out of the air being equally useful in the very hot and in the cold weather. Every house had a small courtyard in front where the family lived and followed their occupations all day long. A corner of a courtyard was used for a kitchen and much of the available space was taken up by the *charpoys*, water pots of the household, and the spinning wheels and grindstones of the women. Each home was neatly kept and carefully swept. The cattle-shed usually adjoined the house.⁶

The houses of better-class peasants or of the head-men of the village were more spacious and commodious. They had a platform (*chaubutra*) outside the houses together with an entrance chamber and an inner room, a spacious courtyard, a *verandah* and even a second storey.⁷ The houses of the rich and notable people were constructed of burnt bricks were more frequent and were of two storeys. Their courtyard was surrounded by a wall. The entrance to this was through a *deohri* or porch, which was a sort of reception room for strangers and where the men of family frequented it to smoke and gossip. But usually there was a detached sitting room, variously called *diwankhana* or *baithak*.⁸ The *deohri* was similarly put to different uses. On the occasion of a wedding, it was the *deohri* where the bride took her last farewell from her parents, and where she was received on reaching her new home. On a death the women came into the *deohri* to view the dead body for the last time.⁹

Under the traditional socio- economic setup comprehended by the *sepi* system, the artisans in rural areas lived separately from the upper castes in separate localities or in small exclusive cluster of houses. The residences of the *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *sunar* and the *julahas* were generally within the precincts of the village which were known according to their castes such as *loharan di gali* and *tarkhana di gali*. Untouchable lived at some distance from the village called *chamarhli* and *thattis*.¹⁰ They lived in *kuccha* (unbricked) houses. It was difficult for any one of the artisan castes to construct a *pacca* (bricked) house, as generally only the *lambardar* and rich land-

⁶ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 36-37; A.E. Barstow, *The Sikhs: An Ethnology*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 2004 (first pb.1928), 162.

⁷ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of the Hindustan*, 196.

⁸ B.S. Saini, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1901-1939)*, Ess Ess Publications, Delhi, 1975, 115.

⁹ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century (1857-1947)*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1963, 93-94.

¹⁰ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 107.

owner owned *pacca* house in village. The construction of *pacca* house by a low caste would certainly contribute towards the development of tension between the upper caste and lower caste. Because to own or to build a new *pacca* house in a village was considered to be the prerogative of affluence and power which also signified superior social status.¹¹

Every village had a common well (*khuh* or *kuwan*) for drinking water. Even rich people had their own well in their houses. Early in the morning at dawn break, ladies used to go to well for taking bath and washing clothes before men folk got up.¹² For natural calls people used fields, ground or wherever some privacy is afforded by shrubs, mounds or some quarries etc.¹³

In contrast to the villages, where the houses were generally of mud, in the towns and cities the houses were of baked bricks and build close together eaves touching eaves in order to make the maximum use of the available space.¹⁴ Soltykoff who visited Amritsar on March 3rd, 1842 noted that “the streets were so narrow that an elephant could barely pass through them without brushing the walls and flimsy balconies with his sides and trappings”.¹⁵ Houses of poor classes were usually single-storeyed. No suitable provision was made letting light and air into the room. They generally had one room which was used for multipurpose such as a living room, bedroom and kitchen. The roof was used for the purpose of sleeping in summer. But the houses of middle classes were multi-storeyed. Moorcraft and Trebeck founded five storey houses at Lahore, built of bricks, burnt tiles and lime, but many were in a crazy condition.¹⁶ Almost each house had a platform (*thara*) in front with two or three steps leading up on the either side. The main door was in the centre of the *thara*. This *thara* was used for several purposes. Women sat there in the afternoon spinning, sewing, embroidering and gossiping or quarrelling. From their respective *tharas* they could talk to each other without leaving their own domain. Upon the *thara* the

¹¹ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 117.

¹² N.Jayaram and R.S.Sandhu, *Housing in India*, B.R.Publishing House, Delhi, 1988, 111.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁴ B.S. Saini, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 116.

¹⁵ Victor Jacquemont and A. Soltykoff, *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago* (ed. H.L.O. Garrett), The Punjab Government Record Office, Monograph No.18, Lahore, 1935, 95.

¹⁶ W. Moorcraft and G.Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladak and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul and Kunduz and Bokhara from 1819 to 1825*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970 (reprint -first published 1837), 105.

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itinerant merchants spread their wares while the women looked at them from their windows above coming down only if they became interested.¹⁷

The houses of rich merchants and the traders were modest in the appearance as compared to those of the nobles, but lacked elaborate carvings and embellishment. They had houses three or four storey high, the front being whitened and covered with coarse mythological pictures. They constructed their houses intended for business or for the temporary residence of men, perhaps with a few rooms or open shops on the ground floor and a large room above opening on the street.¹⁸ Unlike the large villages, in the urban areas the *mohallas* or *galis* of the artisans and craftsmen generally remained separate which were known according to their castes.¹⁹

The house walls and doors were decorated or marked with the figures and designs, every one of which originally had a meaning of its own. They were always drawn by the women. The figures painted were related to life, birds, trees, animals, twinners, a beautiful sitting in a palanquin with a number of *kaharas*, Sun, Moon, Ganpati and its symbol. Swastikas were a few figures on the walls. The most important bird painted on the wall was peacock, which was the symbol of happiness. It might be due to its connection with deities like the son of Shiva-Kartika or due to its easy drawing. Next to peacock the birds like house sparrows, swan etc., were painted on the doors. The folk paintings were painted during certain celebrations on festivals. Especially the outer front walls were cleaned, covered with cow dung or block mud followed by folk paintings. The figures painted on the walls were different to some extent. For instance, the huts having a celebration of marriage, i.e. a lady sitting in a palanquin, a bridegroom, flowery trailors and figures of the bride bridegroom.²⁰

In cities, prostitutes, nautch girls and dancing girls lived in separate areas.²¹ Their localities in Amritsar were called *bazaar-i-kanjran* custodians of prostitutes and

¹⁷ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 90.

¹⁸ Mohan Lal, Munshi, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan to Balk Bokhara and Herat etc.* K.P. Bagchi and Co., Calcutta, 1977 (first pbl. 1846), 8.

¹⁹ Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, 124.

²⁰ H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces of India*, Vol. I, 914-16.

²¹ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 21.

bazaar-i-Mughlan, both located inside the walls.²² We learn from Jacquemont that at Amritsar the prostitutes had their separate quarters. He found some of them suatting on the *verandahs*, or on the balconies, neatly and tastefully dressed usually with gold ornaments.²³ In Jalandhar prostitutes and their associates lived in five different *muhallas* located on the sides. There was a small courtesan's lane in Gujrat.²⁴ In Lahore *hira mandi* was famous as their residential area. It was most spacious and colourful area also called gem market.²⁵ In *hira mandi*, there were four classes of houses: the very select ones of the well known singing girls, those of the nautch girls, of the special courtesans, and of the common prostitutes. The leading singing girls lived in luxurious homes and enjoyed.²⁶ Jacquemont found that the dwellings of the prostitutes were not much magnificent but was certainly the best kept in the city. Some of them had no other dwelling than a hut, sometimes quite large, made of cane work.²⁷

The foundation of a royal building was carried out with great solemnity amidst a scene of splendour. There were no defined regulations for the design of the royal buildings. Everything depended on the pleasure and whims of the ruler. The palace of a ruler had big and spacious buildings with numerous apartments and amenities, e.g. sitting halls, entertainment halls, dinning halls, guest rooms, dressing rooms, bath rooms, retiring rooms opening into courtyard and female apartments called the harem. Underground chamberlains or *tahkhanas* were especially constructed for summer.²⁸ Maharaja Ranjit Singh's summer palace also known as Ram Bagh, was in the north of the city Amritsar at a distance of about of one fourth of a mile from the *darwaza* Ram Bagh. A garden was laid out in 1819 and was enclosed by a masonry wall about 14th feet high with ramparts and a gate capable of carrying guns, while outside the wall was a moat filled with water from the Hasli canal.²⁹ In the middle of the gardens, Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself built a luxurious two storeyed summer palace

²² Indu Banga, "Urban Profile in The Pre-Colonial Punjab", Presidential Address, *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011, 16.

²³ H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, 29.

²⁴ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 184; Indu Banga, "Urban Profile in The Pre-Colonial Punjab", 16.

²⁵ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 185-186.

²⁷ H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, 29.

²⁸ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 35.

²⁹ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, V.V.R.I., Hoshiarpur, 1960, Appendix 19, Para 35; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1892-1893*, 158.

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surrounded by fountains, which cost Rs.125,000 and *jal baradari* or bath, Rs.20,000. Below in the foundation was constructed a cool underground chamber or *tahkhana* for the hot weather.³⁰ Nearby was a swimming bath for ladies of the royal household. At the four corners of the palace small *baradaris* were erected for the use of Rajas Suchet Singh, Dhian Singh, Hira Singh and *mian* Labh Singh. On the south side facing the Ram Bagh, the gate of city, there were two gates connected by a bastion, capable of offering resistance to attack. On the north-east and east sides were large buildings with passages through them, two were double storeyed and were occupied by attendants which these cost about Rs.68,000. On the west side there was beautiful red-stone carved frontage, executed by workmen brought from Delhi by Fakir Aziz-ud-din. The garden had two rows of fountains, from east to west entrance up to the central palace. Both the garden and buildings were constructed under the supervision of Fakir Aziz-ud din, Sardar Desa Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia and were completed with in ten years. The cost of the whole work was Rs.2,14,200. The palace was used by the Maharaja as a country seat when he used to visit Amritsar during *baisakhi*, *diwali* and *dussehra* festivals.³¹ The famous architectural wood-carving, notably on doors, windows and overhanging *balconies*, was indeed the admirable work of art, the remnants of which are still available in the old *havelis* and houses of Amritsar or Lahore particularly doorways formed in elegant carved designs divided in squares with iron or brass bolts in the centre for decoration in Persian style.

Ranjit Singh's architects, Ilahi Bakhsh, Allah Yar and his son Muhammad Yar built a beautiful house at Lahore in an arabesque fashion. It was adorned with small pieces of mirrors set in various pattern with enamel. He built a two-storeyed bungalow movable on wheels. It was taken to Dinanagar and Ropar at the meeting with Lord William Bentick.³² Burns described Saman *burj* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore in following manner:

"It was superbly illuminated with waxen tapers. Bottles filled with different coloured water were placed near the lights, and increased the

³⁰ V.N. Datta, *Amritsar Past and Present*, The Municipal Committee, Amritsar, 1967, 30, 180; Anand Gauba, *Amritsar (1849-1947): A Study in Urban History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1980, 21.

³¹ V.N. Datta, *Amritsar Past and Present*, 30, 180-181; H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-Hundred Years Ago*, 28; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1892-1893*, 158.

³² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 529.

*splendour. The hall of Saman burj was about seventy feet long, and opened to the front by an arched colonnade of marble. The ceiling and walls were entirely inlaid with mirrors or gilded. There were many parts of this palace, evidently owe much of their architectural beauty".*³³

Nau Nihal Singh's *haveli* completed in 1837 is remarkable piece of architecture. It was situated inside Mori gate in Lahore. The *haveli*, rectangular in plan, was a fairly large building. Its entrance on the west side and the façade had been divided into two clear sections: one housing the entrance gate, which was profusely decorated and the other was simple but had plenty of fenestration. The building had a basement and four-storeys above the ground level. At present the basement was no longer approachable. Out of the four-storeys above ground level, two-storeys encompassed the whole area, the third-storey was partially crumbled while the fourth-storey stands in the northwestern corner and was called *shish mahal*. *Shish mahal* in fact was like the Mughal's *hawa mahal* or palace of winds. *Hawa mahal* used to be at the top of the royal buildings where fresh breeze could be enjoyed and at the same time a view of the surroundings could be relished. The *shish mahal* of Nau Nihal Singh's *haveli* served these purposes very well. The wooden roof of Nau Nihal Singh's *haveli* was divided into several geometrical compartments and each one was fitted with a small mirror in the centre. That's why it is called *shish mahal*. In the middle was the 'surya' or the sun-motif. Northern and western walls had fenestrations in the form of windows and ventilators. The ceilings of *haveli* were decorated with paintings and mirrors, worked in gold. The walls were richly ornamented with glass and artificial flowers to which must be added scanes of Hindu mythology. There were blind arches in between the windows and ventilators. These arches housed miniature paintings depicting religious and secular themes. Gold, blue, red, and orange colours were dominated. These paintings were rendered in 18 x 18 inch areas. Beside these miniature paintings there were several other kinds of decorative works like cut-brick work, woodwork including carvings and engravings, painted floral motifs and stucco work. The cut-brick work, however, was of the finest kind. This brick-work manifested its perfection under the oriel window and under the cornices. The carving

³³ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus From the Sea of Lahore*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, 1973, 29.

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of the bricks was so sharp, precise and accurate that bricks seem to be made of wax rather than of baked clay. Wood carving was noticeable on doors and windows and miniature columns introduced at the corners of the oriel windows. Painted work existed almost everywhere.³⁴

The houses of the nobility were built on the plan of the royal buildings. They lived in a style in palatial houses which were like the *havelis* and fortresses. Large income was spent by the nobles on the houses. Their mansions were built with good scheme and design so as to provide the maximum comfort and security. They had lofty porches (*deoharis*), embrasures (*morchas*), outer mud walls (*dhurkot*) and ditches.³⁵ The houses of all Sardars were not of equal grade and category. These were built according to the status and capacity of these nobles. The nobles raised houses at more than one place. There only appears to be difference of degree between the way of living of the chiefs and that of their Sardars who tended to emulate their masters. Ram Sukh Rao had an interesting comment on the houses of Sahib Singh Bhangi, the Ramgharhias and other Sardars. He says that these were like the houses of the poor (*gharibon-ke-kothe*) without any of the features generally associated with the residences of the aristocracy.³⁶ The houses of the nobles were well furnished and decorated with various articles. Decoration was sometimes done in such a way and with such articles so that it may give comfort and repose. The houses were decorated with valuable hangings and adorned with other articles of luxury. The walls and ceilings were adorned with silk hanging, pictures, mirrors, paintings and carpets.³⁷

The *haveli* of Raja Dhian Singh was situated in the Hira Mandi at Lahore, contained numerous rooms and a big courtyard.³⁸ The *havelis* of Jamadar Khushal Singh, Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Dina Nath rivaled in splendour and beauty. The *haveli* of Jamadar Khushal Singh had lovely paintings in the darbar room, showing

³⁴ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 529; Jean-Marie Lafont, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh The French Connections*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 98.

³⁵ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Parbhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), MS, M/774, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, 1980, 145; Garret, H.L.O., *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 29, 35; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans in Connexion with India and Persia*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, (reprint –first Published 1847), 259.

³⁶ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Parbhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 52.

³⁷ Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under The Lahore Darbar (1799-1849)*, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1981, 80.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

architectural landscape, and mirrors in the ceiling.³⁹ Hari Singh Nalwa, a general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, built a majestic garden house at Gujranwala. William Barr describes his house as follows:

*“One of the prettiest Eastern house ever seen by him’, which consists of three-storeys, each containing a room about sixteen feet square, the lower ones being enclosed by broad verandahs, and below ground there is an apartment to retreat from the hot winds. A range of fountains extends close to the entrance front, and at the corners of the "chabootra", on which the dwelling is erected, are circular ornamented seats, which, when used, are covered with silk carpets or Cashmire shawls. At the top of the second and third storeys, similar conveniences were also constructed those of the latter being made after the model of a lotus flower”.*⁴⁰

All the rooms were furnished with the richest carpets. It had underground cells for rest in summer, called *tahkhana*, *zer-e- zamin* or *sardkhana*. The floor of palace was laid with luxurious carpets of Kashmiri and Kabul. The walls of the rooms were magnificently decorated with hangings of silk, skins of lions and tigers.⁴¹

The European officers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh lived in grandeur. Every one of them had a large *kothi* or bungalow. Baron Charles Hugel, who had an opportunity to visit the house of the European officers Allard and Ventura in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, thus talks about the style of their houses as:

“Their house combined the splendour of the East with the comfort of a European residence. On the walls of the entrance hall, before the range of pillars on the first storey, was portrayed the reception of the two French officers at the court of Ranjit Singh, consisting of many thousand figures. The second room is adorned with a profusion of small mirrors in gilt frames, which have an excellent effect, the third is a large hall, extending the entire width of the house, and

³⁹ Jean-Marie Lafont, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh The French Connections*, 98.

⁴⁰ William Barr, *March From Delhi To Peshawar and From Thence To Cabul*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 75-76; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, Sujlana Publishers, Jullunder, 1976, 108, 18.

⁴¹ H. R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 529.

*terminating in the sleeping apartment. At a short distance behind the house stands an ancient tomb, crowned with a lofty dome. Carpets brought from Kashmir and Kabul were spread, hangings of silk and brocade, pictures and filling of looking glasses to increase the beauty in the night when lights were lit, was done. Portraits adorned rooms with a profusion of small mirrors and gilt frame".*⁴²

Describing the magnificence of General Avitabile house at Peshawar, William Barr writes, the centre of the one side of an old, but spacious caravanserai, the walls were repaired and converted into lines of defense, both for musketry and cannon; and as there were godowns and store-houses in its interior.⁴³ Court's house at Peshawar was a mud building of two apartments, erected in Ali Mardan's garden.⁴⁴

Many eminent Sikh Sardars and nobles built beautiful mansions according to their means in Amritsar. A number of stately buildings called *bungas*, sprang up around the Harmandir Sahib, for their use whenever they visited Amritsar. All these *bungas* were named after their respective confederacies and Sardars. These places were used as rest houses for accommodating pilgrims during festive occasions.⁴⁵

Tent life was equally popular with the poor and the rich. Traders, merchants, travellers and common men had taken advantage of trees, planted along the road on both sides and *serais* or rest houses at certain distances for their accommodation. They used tents made of cloth.⁴⁶ The ruling class made use of tents of a great variety for pleasure and for official tours.⁴⁷ They pitched their camps in a haphazard way, generally by the side of a village or a stream or river in order to ensure themselves of a regular supply of water. The tent of the ruler was pitched in the centre and around it the contingents formed an irregular circle. Burnes gives the description of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's camp in 1832, which were about 20 miles from the Lahore.

⁴² Baron Charles Hugal, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs* (translated from German by Major T.B.Jervis), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970 (reprint, first pub.1845), 283-84.

⁴³ William Barr, *March From Delhi To Peshawar*, 143; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 151.

⁴⁴ Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 145.

⁴⁵ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-1884*, 157; Madanjit Kaur, *The Golden Temple Past and Present*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1983, 178; P.S.Arshi, *The Golden Temple, History, Art and Architecture*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, 27.

⁴⁶ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, 417-418.

⁴⁷ Baron Charles Hugal, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 22.

*“A large pavilion of red cloth, surrounded by extensive wall of the same material, marked the encampment of Runjeet, while his troops, and chiefs were cantoned in picturesque groups around. The suite of tents which had been pitched for accommodation was more elegant. They were made of scarlet and yellow cloth, and the ground was covered with the carpets of Cashmere, and pieces of French satin. In the each tent was a camp bed, with curtains of yellow silk, and coverlets of the same description”.*⁴⁸

Food and food habits also provide an important indicator of the social condition and status of a particular community. The food habits depend on the economic and climatic conditions along with the socio religious customs and practices. These have always varied from community to community, caste to caste, province to province and region to region. The following proverb indicates the importance of food:

*“pet bhariya rotian, te sabbhe galaan motian,
pet na paian rotian, te sabbhe galaan khotian”.*⁴⁹

(If the stomach is full everything looks nice, but if it empty nothing pleases the eyes).

Wheat, rice, millet, pulses, vegetables, fruits, meat and milk formed the essential food. Wheat, maize and rice form the staples food of the people of Punjab.⁵⁰ During Spring, barley, *kangni* and *bajra* formed the staples of diet during autumn staples of food were *makki*, *moth*, *mung*, *jowar* and *mash*.⁵¹

The ordinary food of the people consists of cakes (*chappatis*), made of wheat, maize and *jowar*. *Chappatis* were eaten with *dal* or pottage of gram or pulses, carrots, onions, turnips and generally with *sarson ka sag* (green rape).⁵² *Makki di roti* with *sarson ka sag* was favourite dish of the Punjabis. Women put extra lumps of ghee into

⁴⁸ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus From the Sea of Lahore*, Vol. I, 19-20.

⁴⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 61.

⁵⁰ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 19-20.

⁵¹ *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-84*, 33-34; *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 18.

⁵² *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 38-39; *Gazetteer of Gujranwala District, 1883-84*, 28.

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sag and big chunks of freshly churned butter on the *makki di roti*.⁵³ *Churi* (flat bread when mixed up with sugar and clarified butter in liberal quantity) was common food in the Punjab.⁵⁴ The people of lower classes could ill afford to spend on rich and dainty dishes and contented themselves with simple food. *Khichari* was the most popular dish of this class. Their normal food was boiled rice and some other vegetables.⁵⁵ Jats were especially fond of curd, buttermilk and ghee.⁵⁶ The poor classes used inferior grain such as *china*, *mandua* and *jowar*.⁵⁷

The daily food of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim was essentially the same except that meat was a popular dish of the Muslims. They freely took beef, fish, flesh of goats, sheep and other beasts and birds of prey. Meats from cows, camels, rabbits, fowls and roasted chickens were used on festive occasions.⁵⁸ For Muslims it was forbidden to take pork and some other flesh foods or eat the flesh of an animal not properly slaughtered.⁵⁹ The Hindus were mostly vegetarian, but those who were non-vegetarian had generally to satisfy themselves with the meat of goats and sheep.⁶⁰ According to Sikh *rahatmarayda*, they were allowed to take *jhatka* meat.⁶¹ They were allowed to eat flesh of fowls, quails and partridge in their diet.⁶²

Food was cooked in each house separately by women, but sometimes three or four families clubbed together and used the same oven (*tandur*). For the preparation of a meal the whole of the kitchen floor and a part of the enclosing walls, or if the

⁵³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 65.

⁵⁴ "Heer ne churi kutee utte khand ralai". (Heer made *churi* and mixed it with sugar) K.S. Kang, *Punjab Wich Qissa Hir Ranjha*, Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2004, 265.

⁵⁵ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature (1750-1850)*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 314; P.N. Chopra *Life and Letter During Mughal Age*, Shiva Lal Agarwal and Co., Agra, 1963, 34.

⁵⁶ They lived upon a moderate diet which is evident from "*Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani Da*"; "*Missi roti te kacha makhan, maan bhaye so khaiye*." (Bread and butter milk pleasure of heart) Tulsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani Da*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Jhagre*, Sardar Sahit Bhawan, Patiala, 1974, 77.

⁵⁷ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-84*, 34.

⁵⁸ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, 318; M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals (1526-1700)*, Chugh Publications, Allahabad, 1978, 2.

⁵⁹ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 220.

⁶⁰ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals*, 1, 2.

⁶¹ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, 60.

⁶² "*Khatrian di daal chapatti, jattan di goshat boti*." Khatri's diet contained pulses and bread while Jat ate meat. It signified food habits of Khatri and Jats that the Khatri were vegetarians and the Jats were non-vegetarians. Tulsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti te Khatrani Da*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, 77; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 60; Steinbach, *The Punjab: Being a Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970 (reprint -first pub. 1845), 76.

operations had to be performed in the open space as was required for cooking and eating purposes had to be plastered with cow dung and earth. A Hindu stripped himself of clothes except his *dhoti* or loin cloth, before eating. Wooden sandals were used in kitchen.⁶³ Generally people ate three meals a day, at morning (*chahwela*), at noon (*battewela*) and in the evening (*shahwela*).⁶⁴ The agricultural classes, before starting their work in morning, used to have light meal to break their fast, but a more substantial meal of cakes and buttermilk (*lassi*) was brought to them in the fields by their women. The heaviest meal of the day was taken at the Sun-down in the house when the day's work was over.⁶⁵

The richness and variety were two chief features of the food taken by the kings and upper classes. The royalty maintained a well organized and expensive royal kitchen, with a large number of officials and their subordinate staff. The cooks of royal kitchen used to prepare a great variety of dainty dishes of various kinds of grains, vegetables and meat for the use of the royal household.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very fond of dainty dishes of different varieties. In 1838, at Dinanagar, in a shawl tent Osborne got a chance to have a pleasure to take breakfast with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Thus he describes as follows.

“Maharaja Ranjit Singh's table was formed by one of his servants standing up close to his litter with his back towards him, and then stopping till his shoulders were on a level with its floor. A tray containing different sorts of curry, rice, sweetmeats and milk was then placed upon the man's shoulders; and the Maharaja commenced his breakfast with an apparently good appetite. The different eatables were served up in the nicest and coolest little vessels, about the size of tea-cups, made of fresh green leaves, so closely sewn together as to be capable of retaining liquids, and beautifully cool and clean. A tray was brought upon each of which was arranged about six of these little cups, containing different sorts of curry, rice, curd and some remarkably fat quails, with all these

⁶³ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 221.

⁶⁴ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 62.

⁶⁵ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District*, 1883-84, 38.

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*bones taken out, and highly spiced and seasoned. And a very hearty breakfast was wound up with a delicious draught of iced sharbat”.*⁶⁶

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took bread, *pulao*, milk and fruits in his lunch. His dinner contained a little rice and a quail or half a partridge with some fruits and sweetmeats.⁶⁷ In summer he ate *sattu* (flour of parched barley) with iced *sharbat* of sugar. He used fresh *bhutta* of maize in season and green parched gram as well as dry parched gram. Several kinds of pickles and jams were also used. *Sharbat* (syrup) mixed with ice and milk was used with his meals everyday.⁶⁸

Punjabis were quite fond of spices. To make food more delicious and tasty, number of spices like salt, pepper, turmeric, clove, cumin seeds and coriander were commonly used.

*“dhania, zeera, loungh, mirch naal loon bisar”.*⁶⁹

(Spices were liberally used).

Pickles or *achar* of different kinds were very popular among common people. Sometimes *chapattis* were eaten with lime or mango pickles. *Achar* of mangoes had been of special liking because of its flavour and it was eaten as an appetizer.⁷⁰ *Chatnis* (sauce) and *muraba* (preserved fruits mixed with sugar) had been of special liking of the people of the Punjab.

*“muraba aambh achari, naal preet khaway”.*⁷¹

(Preserved fruits and pickles were eaten with taste).

In Sialkot, to make food more palatable, a wash of vetches or country pea, called *saluna* was sometimes added.⁷²

⁶⁶ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh With an Introduction of the Origin and Rise of Sikh State*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 115; Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 557.

⁶⁷ H.L.O. Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 50.

⁶⁸ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 581-82.

⁶⁹ Kulwant Singh, *Var Nadir Shah*, Ravi Sahit Parkashan, Amritsar, 1988, 99; Tulsia Singh, *Jhagra Jattii te Khatrani Da*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, 77.

⁷⁰ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letter Under the Mughals*, 34; *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-83*, 34.

⁷¹ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 20.

⁷² *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-83*, 34.

Fruits, green and dry of different varieties constituted an important item in the diet of well to do classes of all communities. The seasonal fruits, such as mangoes, blackberries, oranges, guavas, dates, figs, grapes, apples, papayas, pears and mulberry etc, were in abundance and were enjoyed by the rich and the poor alike. The most favourite and the common fruit in the Punjab was the mango, which was called *ambah*.⁷³ Maharaja Ranjit Singh loved mangoes of Darband and Multan, from the latter place these were brought daily. In his daily diet he used mangoes in form of jam (*muraba*) and pickles.⁷⁴ Varieties of imported and dry fruits decorated the tables of the royalty and the nobility. Dry fruits included coconuts, almonds, walnuts, apricot, neuza and currant were used.⁷⁵

Rich foods and varieties of salt cakes and sweetmeats were prepared especially on festive occasions. After delivery of a baby, *panjiri* made of equal quantities of sugar, ghee, roasted gram flour and dry fruits were prepared for the mother for her good health. During the wedding *bhaji* was made. Indications in this respect are found in literature of the period. *Nugdi* was sweetmeat made of gram flour and was fried in ghee; *shakar-paras*, small sugar coated balls; *jalebi* were red curled sweetmeat fried in ghee; *bhisht-bundi* was a sweet with a coating of sugar, gram and ghee; *laddu* was a ball comprised of bundi; *bihdana* was a sweet jam made of quince seed; *pharakari* was sweet cake made double with sugar between two parts and fried in ghee; *kali-kand* was a milk cake; *khajur* was a sort of palm cake-sweetmeat.

*“lage nugdiya talan te shakarpare
taley khub jaleb gulbhishat bundi laddu
mathi hor khajur pharakari de
andrase kachorian ate luchi
pereh naal khutaiyan hor gup chup”*.⁷⁶

⁷³ M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life the Great Mughals*, 10.

⁷⁴ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 582.

⁷⁵ Qadir Yar, *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal* (ed. Bikram Singh Ghuman), 69; Fazal Shah, *Sohni Fazal Shah*, 107.

⁷⁶ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1963, 73; Kulwant Singh, *Var Nadir Shah*, 103.

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Agra Sethi refers, *luchis*, *andrasa*, *peras* (made of *khoya*), *khutaiys* (soft baked biscuits), *kachori*, *bhalas*, different kinds of sweet and salt *pulau*.

“*mohan bhog te luchi kachori,*
bhalley naal banaye,
mithe saluney zard bhehenze (palau)”.⁷⁷

Wine drinking was common in the Punjab particularly among the royalty and nobility. It had become an important part of the luxuries enjoyed by the upper classes. The royalty was so much addicted to intoxicants. Princes also took wine frequently. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a reputed drunkard. He drank wine frequently and in a large quantity.⁷⁸ His nobles were allowed to distill liquor in their houses without seeking any special permission and paying any duty. Hugel refers to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's love for drinking. Faqir Azizuddin gave Hugel a recipe of the brandy which was specially brewed for the Maharaja, called the royal wine. In this 'devils drink' were mingled the strongest sauces compounded from flesh of every kind of animal, except beef, pearls and jewels, musk, opium and plants of various kinds.⁷⁹ In 1832, the Maharaja asked Alexander Burnes whether wine drinking was best before or after meals, and laughed heartily when Burnes recommended both.⁸⁰

Maharaja Ranjit Singh always praised drinking parties. At his drinking parties "he generally ordered the attendance of all his dancing girls, whom he forced to drink the wine."⁸¹ Hugel observed that the Maharaja's dancing girls consumed incredible quantity of spirituous liquors without becoming intoxicated. They drank strongest brandy without the least effect.⁸²

The common people took wine prepared from sugarcane molasses and the bark of *babul* tree. The distilleries were often run by the men known as *kalals*. They

⁷⁷ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 16, 20, 22.

⁷⁸ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 563.

⁷⁹ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 298.

⁸⁰ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus From the Sea of Lahore*, Vol. I, 21, 31.

⁸¹ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 190.

⁸² Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 57, 309, 310, 317-18, 344-46.

preserved it in large earthen vessels. It was source of strong attraction among the agricultural classes.⁸³ It was used by soldiers in abundance.⁸⁴

For smoking, people used *hukka* made of earthen and metallic pipes. Muslims and Hindus were especially accustomed to it and consumed a major quantity of the intoxicant by frequent smoking. It was their chief and customary means of entertainment after meal. It was usual to see people sitting cross-legged at their doors with *hukka* pipes in their mouth; sometimes women, too, indulged in smoking.⁸⁵

Another intoxicants used by the people were *afim* (opium,) *bhang* (hump), *charas*, *post* (poppy husk) and *ganja*. *Post* was well mixed in water and then taken to use increased sexual power, though it destroyed natural strength.⁸⁶ *Bhang* or *sukha* was a drug prepared from leaves of *cannabis sativa*. It was commonly used by the upper and lower strata.⁸⁷ Opium or *afim* was also used in abundance. It made men drowsy and nodding. It was taken by the rich and poor alike. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was also addicted to this intoxicant.⁸⁸ There were people who also used a poisonous drug like *dhatūra*. Waris Shah gives some intoxicants used by the people.⁸⁹

Ornaments, costumes and dresses of the people are one of the best indications of their cultural identity. It is also a reflection of their social and economic background. Dress is determined chiefly by the climatic conditions, as well as by the changing requirements of rituals, customs, economy, occupation and manners of their country or region. Aesthetic considerations too are responsible for determining the clothing. Dress varied from community to community. Sometimes it also reflected upon the caste of a person. People wore different types of dress for different seasons of the year, and there were different ways of putting them. There was a certain uniformity

⁸³ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 520, 563.

⁸⁴ Shah Muhammad, *Jangnama* (ed. G.L. Sharma), Sunder Dass and Sons, Amritsar, 1983, 85.

⁸⁵ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 42; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 39.

⁸⁶ Waris Shah, *Hir Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), 107; Daljit Singh, *Socio-Economic History of the Punjab, (1501-1700)*, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2004, 235.

⁸⁷ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, 317.

⁸⁸ Baron Charles Hugal, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 298.

⁸⁹ “*Aak post dhatūra te bhang pee, maut usne mul kyon layee ji nee.*” To drink opium, *dhatūra*, hump and *post*, he invites his death. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), 10.

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among the peasants and lower classes who wore minimum clothes because of the requirement of their occupation.

The dress of the cultivators was simple in the extreme. They generally went quite naked except wearing a *dhoti* or even a cotton *langota*. In one of the painting of W.C. Archer, two Sikh cultivators were shown wore white loincloths, black striped wraps and white turban-bands, proceeding to their field.⁹⁰ The material was almost always unbleached cotton made up by the village weaver from home- grown material spun by the women of the family.⁹¹ The dress of common men comprised a *pagri* (turban), a *pyjama* or a loin cloth, *dhoti*, *tahmat* or *majhla* as a lower garment and a *kurta* (shirt) as the upper cloth.⁹² *Pagri* or turban was common head-dress among the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Sikhs sometimes wore *pagri* sometimes the *dastar*.⁹³ A small fitting turban (coloured) called *safa* which came down over the forehead was also worn by the Sikhs.⁹⁴ The Muslims used skull cap under the turban.⁹⁵ Among the Hindus, especially Baniyas, was closely bound in regular folds on the head.⁹⁶ The red *pagri* sometimes worn by Hindus, particularly Kambohs, but never worn by Mohammedans.⁹⁷

The upper part of the body was covered with a jacket and a *kurta*, a loose and wide shirt worn by the men. Sometimes white cloth over their body called *chaddar* was used (*chaddar* served in day as a garment and at night as a bedsheet) and if very cold they wore shawls *kambals* (blankets) or *lois* made of wool.⁹⁸ Some rich people also wore *angarakha* instead of *kurta*. Over the *angrakha* a *chogha* was worn, thick or thin, according to the season. Trousers or *pyjamas* were tied to their waist. *Tahmad* or *majhla* usually worn by the Muslims. In case of Hindu *tahmad* was gathered up between the legs, while the Muslims wore it loose.⁹⁹ *Tahmad* or *majhla* was three

⁹⁰ W.G. Archer, *Painting of the Sikhs*, Her Majesty's Office, Landon, 1966, 157.

⁹¹ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 39.

⁹² *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 19.

⁹³ A loose full turban wound on without any particular care called *dastar*. G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 55.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹⁵ H.L.O. Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 25.

⁹⁶ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 55.

⁹⁷ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 40.

⁹⁸ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 19.

⁹⁹ *Tahmad* or *majhla* was three yards long and one yard and half wide and was wrapped round the loins reaching the ankles. *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 19; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 57.

yards long and one yard and half wide and was wrapped round the loins reaching the ankles. The Sikhs and Hindus wore drawers or breeches (*kach*)¹⁰⁰. They also tied *lachs* and *lungis* to their waist. *Lungis* of white or blue were preferred by the Muslims.¹⁰¹ Muslims also wore *salwar* (three kinds single, double-wadded), it differed from the *pyjama* not being tight near the ankles. *Pyjamas* were a hindrance to those who worked with their own hands, so they preferred to wear a *langoti* of white and blue colour.¹⁰² Woolen clothes were not commonly worn, nor could the bulk of the people afford them. The Awans were often seen with a striped blanket in the winter.¹⁰³ Rough shoes of the usual pattern were worn,¹⁰⁴ but majority of people remained bare footed. And rich people used ornamented and embroider slippers.¹⁰⁵

The dress of menial or lower castes in the rural area was similar that of the other villagers. The holiday costume of a Sikh artisans as observed by William Barr was comprised of a yellow silk turban, with *pyjama* of the same material reaching to the knee, and a crimson robe wrapped round his body, was hastening to the fashionable rendezvous, and it him another, enveloped in the folds of a scarlet cloth *chogah* embroidered with gold, green silk trousers and a pair of ornamented slippers, peeping from beneath them.¹⁰⁶ They may be seen satisfying the requirements of the decency with a simple breech-clout.¹⁰⁷ But when at work the clothes were often discarded.

Religious classes had their own distinctive dresses. The ordinary orthodox Muslim was only anxious to wear clothes of simple material like linen and to avoid silk, velvet, brocade or furs and coloured garments. His turban was usually of the standard size of seven yards, if there was any end, they were thrown at the back. He wore ordinary shirt and drawer. An orthodox Muslim was very particular in wearing socks and shoes to maintain the ritual purity of his ablutions. The *sufis* wore loose gowns made of woollen material and a *topi*. Some wore a tall *darwish* cap, the

¹⁰⁰ Jacquemont gives the description of the dress of the Sikh that they wore baggy breeches, a small turban and a tight tunic. H.L.O. Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 25.

¹⁰¹ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48.

¹⁰² *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-84*, 33.

¹⁰³ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 39; *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-84*, 33.

¹⁰⁵ William Barr, *Journal of March From Delhi to Peshawar with Mission of Col. Wade*, James Madden and Co., London, 1844, 62.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁷ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1892-93*, 39.

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qalansuwah on their head and wooden sandals on their feet and wrapped just a sheet of unsewn cloth round them. *Ulemas* put on a turban, *qaba* and a *pyjama*.

Among the Hindus, there was no uniform dress for ascetics (*sadhu* and *jogi*) of either sex. The more demonstrative carried a deer-skin for a robe. Some of the ascetics contended themselves with a simple loin-cloth (*langota*) and a dried gourd to supply all their needs of clothing and other necessities.¹⁰⁸ The *sannyasis* generally wore orhre coloured garments and some of them went naked. They could be distinguished by the *tilak* mark on their forehead. Some of the *sannyasis* carried a tiger's or panther's skin on their shoulders. Almost all of them used ash for the *tilak* mark which generally consisted of three horizontal lines representing the trident of Shiva or his third eye.¹⁰⁹ Hugel saw a dancing *fakir*, "who wore long black robe lined with red; a black and white belt with astrological signs hung from his right shoulder across the left side, and a high magic cap completed his fantastic array".¹¹⁰

Among the Sikhs, *udasis** in their appearance had some distinctive marks. Generally, however, the *udasis* wore some saffron coloured clothes. They wore *topi* (cap). The Diwane *udasis* (a group of *udasis*) wore round *pagri* (turban). Two groups of *udasis*: the Nirban and the Niranjania remained naked (*nage*).¹¹¹ The Nirmalas wore white clothes.¹¹²

The dresses of nobility and the members of royalty were almost radically different from that of the commoners. We do get a number of references about the dress of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the members of the ruling class in contemporary sources. The dress of the Maharaja was simple. H.L.O Garret describes his dress in the following:

"He wore a little turban of white muslin rather carelessly tied, a kind of long tunic with a cape falling over his shoulders, like a French riding cloak, tight trousers with bare foot. His clothes were of white

¹⁰⁸ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of People of the Hindustan*, 211-212.

¹⁰⁹ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1979, 109-110.

¹¹⁰ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cahsmere and the Punjab*, 313.

* *Udasi*- a sect among Sikhs started by Sri Chand, son of Guru Nanak Dev.

¹¹¹ Sulakhan Singh, *Heterodoxy in the Sikh Tradition*, ABS Publications, Jalandhar, 1999, 90.

¹¹² Ibbetson Denzil, *Punjab Castes*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1974 (reprint), 228.

*Kashmir tissue with a little gold trimming on the collar, cuffs and sleeves”.*¹¹³

The Maharaja in summer wore white Dacca muslin, and in winter he used plain silk or *pashmina*.¹¹⁴ Baron Charles Hugel, a traveller, during his visit to Lahore in 1836, gives the description of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's dress during *basant* festival as follows:

*“The Maharaja dressed in yellow from the turban (pagri) down to his socks and slippers. His coat (angarakha) was tied over the chest, and reached to the knees; the trousers fell in many folds down to the ankle. Over the whole was worn a mantle lined with skins. The entire costume of the Maharaja was a yellow pashmina, green being worn by him sometime, but not commonly”.*¹¹⁵

Although the Maharaja dressed in simple clothes, yet he liked to be surrounded by well-dressed and richly embellished ministers, courtiers, civil and military officials. He preferred his nobles to attend richly dressed and thus enhance the splendour of the Darbar. Every imaginable variety of picturesque costumes was worn by them.¹¹⁶ Osborne who visited the Maharaja's Darbar in 1838, remarked, “few if any other courts either in Europe or the East could show such a fine looking set of men as the principal Sardars of the Punjab”.¹¹⁷ The court colour however was yellow or green, and the chiefs and nobles were all clothed in yellow garments except Raja Hira Singh, who wore a satin dress of light green and pink.¹¹⁸ On the festive occasions like *basant* and *baisakhi* all the courtiers, nobles and troopers were ordered to attire

¹¹³ H.L.O. Garret, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 36.

¹¹⁴ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 122; Lepal Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, S.Chand and Co., Delhi, 1957, 90; Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, 223; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 1.

¹¹⁵ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cahsmere and the Punjab*, 380; Maninder, *European Travellers to the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh 1830-39*, Unpublished, M. Phil. Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 59.

¹¹⁶ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 62, 64; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 8; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 581.

¹¹⁷ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 29; Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 229-30.

¹¹⁸ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cahsmere and the Punjab*, 287; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 156.

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yellow garments.¹¹⁹ The nobility used *pashmina* and the woollen cloth of Kashmir in winter, and the fine muslin and silk in summer. A sizeable proportion of their income was spent by them on their gorgeous dresses.¹²⁰ Describing the dresses of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's courtiers, G.L. Chopra writes about Sham Singh Attariwala that he had a yellow scarf round his neck; a turban was wrapped round his head in a somewhat irregular fashion, as was case with most of the Sikhs.¹²¹ W.G. Archer showed Lehna Singh Majithia's painting as "a Sikh Sardar in white turban, white dress and yellow trousers."¹²² Raja Suchet Singh, another courtier of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, dressed himself splendidly. Osborne gives us an interesting account of the semi-military and semi- court costume in which he was dressed on state occasions.

*"His dress was magnificent, a helmet skull cap of bright polished steel inlaid with gold, a deep fringe of chain-mail of the same material reaching to his shoulders; there plums of black heron's feathers waiving on his crest and three shawls of lilac; white and scarlet twisted very round and tight, interlaced with one another and gathered round the edge of the helmet, wore a rich thick quilted jacket of bright yellow silk".*¹²³

Raja Dhian Singh, chief minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh shown in a painting wearing mauve vest and yellow turban and trousers.¹²⁴ Raja Dina Nath's dress reflected that he was a *pandit*. He wore a loose white gold fringed robe of silk down to the knees. His trouser was tight fitting and pink in colour. His turban was tied after the Maratha style, at once short and light.¹²⁵

The idea of uniform, dress and equipments of the army was borrowed from the British who had introduced it into India during the eighteenth century. Maharaja Ranjit Singh borrowed from the British not only the idea but also the pattern of their

¹¹⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 388, 438, 487; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 406.

¹²⁰ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab a Sovereign State*, 150; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 8, 20; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under the Lahore Darbar*, M. Phil Dissertation, 85.

¹²¹ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 151; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 41.

¹²² W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Figure no. 36, 142.

¹²³ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 62-64; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 56; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility Under Lahore Darbar*, M. Phil Dissertation, 87.

¹²⁴ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Figure no. 9, 124.

¹²⁵ G.L.Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 151.

uniform, with a few adjustments necessitated by his circumstances.¹²⁶ During the summers whole regular army was dressed in white, with turbans of different colours like red, green and yellow. In 1838, Osborne reviewed the troops of all arms at Lahore wearing either red or yellow silk turbans.¹²⁷

The regular cavalry was dressed in crimson but light jackets and dark blue trousers bearing red stripes with crimson silk turbans. Jacquemont observed that “Sikh cavalry clothed and armed in a uniform that was half French and half Sikh”.¹²⁸ William Barr, has made interesting comments on the uniform of regular cavalry in the following words:

*“The trooper’s dress is a red jacket with broad facings of buff crossed in front by a pair of black belts, one of which supports a pouch, the other a bayonet round the waist, they wear a girdle. Their trousers are long, of dark blue cloth, with a red stripe, and their turbans of crimson silk brought somewhat into a peak in front and ornamented in the centre with a small brass half moon, from which springs a glittering spring about two inches in height. Their saddles edged with a border of blue and white stripes, and the harness is adorned with brass studs”.*¹²⁹

Lord Auckland, who visited Amritsar in December, 1836, gives a very favourable impression of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s cavalry:----- “horsemen innumerable, with their metal caps, horse like plumes and silk dresses, the most picturesque troops in the world-----”.¹³⁰

There was however, different coloured facing to distinguish the regiment. The uniform of the regular infantry was scarlet. Their jackets, called *kurtis*, were made of broad cloth and had white stripes of braid across the breast, while their trousers were in blue linen, and turbans were of the same colour. Their belts were of black

¹²⁶ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs (1799-1840)*, Motilal Banarsi Das, Delhi, 1964, 223.

¹²⁷ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 154-155.

¹²⁸ H.L.O.Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 52; Maninder, *European Travellers to the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh*, M. Phil Dissertation, 16.

¹²⁹ William Barr, *Journal of March From Delhi to Peshawar with Mission of Col. Wade*, 121; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 123; Maninder, *European Travellers to the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh*, M. Phil Dissertation, 108.

¹³⁰ Auckland to Hobhouse, 9 December, 1836 ----- Broughton (B.M), fol, 359 FF. cited in B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 318.

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leather.¹³¹ Commenting on the dress of infantry Jacquemont observed that they dressed in tight white trousers, a white jacket and little blue turban. In winter they wore a uniform of red cloth like the British sepoy.¹³²

The artillery men wore both black and red jackets, with white or blue trousers. Their uniforms are described by William Barr as follows:

*“They wear red turbans (the jamadars or officers being of silk) which hang down so as to cover the back part of their neck: white trousers with long boots, black waist and cross belts; and black leather scabbard with brass ornaments”.*¹³³

The English Rifle regiment wore turban of blue colour with one end loose and spread to cover the head, back of the neck and shoulders. Their foot gear consisted generally of the country made shoes.¹³⁴ Similar Ventura’s battalion were called Gurkha *paltan* dressed in dark green jackets facing, and had chakos or caps of black banat of a European pattern.¹³⁵

The high officers of these regular troopers were allowed to exercise their own taste in dress. Almost all officers were dressed according to their choice, some in English other in French uniform or in mixture of both; some wore turbans or caps with shawls wrapped round them and others helmets and chakos; some had high boots with coloured tops and other shoes; some wore white and other coloured pantaloons.¹³⁶ White, red, green and yellow were the most popular colours of the clothes used by them, which generally consisted of jacket, *chooridar pyjamas*, turbans, cloaks and plumes. Henry Fane’s description of their dress is interesting as follows:

¹³¹ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 224; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 56; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 317.

¹³² H.L.O. Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 52; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 160.

¹³³ William Barr, *Journal of March From Delhi to Peshawar with Mission of Col. Wade*, 149; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 62; Maninder, *European Travellers to the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh*, M. Phil Dissertation, 110.

¹³⁴ Lt. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab: Being A Brief Account of the Country of Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 94.

¹³⁵ Captian Leopold Von Orlich, *Travels in India, Including Sind and the Punjab*, Vol. I, Longmans, London, 1845, 227.

¹³⁶ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 227.

*“The dress usually worn by the chiefs is handsome and consisting of the turban with a small plume, stuck in the front; a short jacket generally made of a silk handsomely embroidered and trousers made wide at the knee and fitting close round the ankle, with a dagger struck in the belt, often covered with precious stones”.*¹³⁷

The officers of cavalry were attired from top to toe in bright crimson silk.¹³⁸ Some of the Sikh chiefs occasionally imitated European dress like frock, coats and pantaloons. The costume of the high European officers consisted of a cap of Persian velvet of red or green, having lace on its border, a cloak of Kashmir *shawl* in the winter season and of white cloth in the summer, a shirt, a waist coat and a pair of loose trousers.¹³⁹ For instance William Barr observed the wearing of General Avitabile and Court in 1839 and states that their costumes were consisting of “a long green coat fashioned not unlike a Musalman’s Chapkum and ornamented with a profusion of lace and three rows of oblong buttons of solid gold, trousers of scarlet cloth, with a broad gold stripe down the seams, a green velvet cap, with band also of gold lace and a tassel of the same material, but no peak and an embroidered belt to which a be-jewelled sabre was attached”.¹⁴⁰ Gold jewels, velvets, silk, muslins and shawls were profusely used by them. Gold was used on their weapons, saddery trappings and clothes, besides ornaments. The usual method of distinguishing ranks of officers from one another was by means of lace work on their jackets or *kurtis*.¹⁴¹

The *ghorcharas*, the most important portion of the irregular army of the Sikhs were responsible for the supply of their own accoutrements. They constituted the elite of the Sikh army and were most gaudily dressed. They were handsomely dressed in chain armour and quilted jackets, made of rich silk of either a bright yellow, green or scarlet colour.¹⁴² A number of contemporary writers described the dress of

¹³⁷ Henry Fane, *Five Years in India, 1835-1839*, Vol. I, Henry Colburn, London, 1842, 121-122.

¹³⁸ William Barr, *Journal of March From Delhi to Peshawar with Mission of Col. Wade*, 121.

¹³⁹ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 228; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 145, 157.

¹⁴⁰ William Barr, *Journal of March From Delhi to Peshawar with Mission of Col. Wade*, 231-232; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 157.

¹⁴¹ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 228-29.

¹⁴² C. H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 118; W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, 39; W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 71.

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ghorcharas, as well as their amours. Description by Baron Hugel is perhaps by far the best and is given:

*“Their uniform consisted of velvet coat or gaberdine over which most of them wore a shirt of mail. Other had this shirt made to form the part of the tunic. A belt round the waist, richly embroidered in gold. Some wore a steel helmet, inlaid with gold, and surmounted with kalgi or black heron’s plume; other wore a cap of steel; this cap lies firmly on the turban, and covers the whole head, having openings for the eyes. The left arm is often covered from the hand to the elbow with a steel cuff inlaid with gold. The round Sikh shield hangs at the back, fastened with straps across the chest, a quiver at the right side and a bow slung at the back being carried as part of the equipment; a bag made in the belt holds the balls, and a tall bayonet, frequently ornamented with gold, held in the right hand when the man is on foot and carried over the shoulder when in the saddle completes the dress”.*¹⁴³

Emily Eden in 1838, during his visit to Amritsar described the dress of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s *ghorcharas* or bodyguards that “one trooper was dressed entirely in yellow satin, with gold scarfs and shawls; but the other half were in that cloth of gold which is called Kincob----- the fond being gold and the pattern scarlet or purple or yellow”.¹⁴⁴

Though forming a part of the irregular horsemen, the Akalis, accoutrements and never failed to attract the attention of outside observers. Jacquemont observed that, the Akalis were dressed in the blue and armed with swords, bows, spears or matchlocks. The base of their turban was surrounded with a steel ring.¹⁴⁵ The rest of their dress was a pair of shorts, a long blue shirt and a simple country made a pair of shoes. They usually carried a brown blanket with red striped border.¹⁴⁶ Akali Phoola Singh, unlike other members of his sect, had the air of a true courtier instead of a religious fanatic. He was not attired in the usual blue dress of the Akalis, but he had a

¹⁴³ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cahsmere and the Punjab*, 330-332; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, 39.

¹⁴⁵ Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, 408; H.L.O. Garrett, *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 50.

¹⁴⁶ Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 227; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1892-93*, 40.

magnificent white costume fitted to the body, with a broad, double-sided, gold-laced bauldric hung round his neck and interwoven with a light silk scraf, crossed in the front of his chest. On his head he wore a white turban with the blue *nihangi* insignia overhung with a variegated heron's plume. In his left hand he was holding a bright sword. The coat fitted the body like a bodice.¹⁴⁷

Indications of female dresses were interesting. The dresses of the women were brighter, and there were always some colours in it. A warp was worn over the head called *dupatta*, *chaddar*, *chuni*, *salu* and *shawl*.¹⁴⁸ The *purda* system compelled most Mohammedan and many Hindu and Sikh ladies of the better classes to wear a wrap, when wished to leave the house. *Dupatta* was gracefully folded over the head and shoulders, either entirely red or yellow being as favourite colours.¹⁴⁹ These were often ornamented with needle work or embroidery. In addition to *dupatta* the women of the Punjab also used *phulkari*, a cotton cloth of black or red ground with a flowered pattern embroidered in floss-silk.¹⁵⁰ Ladies both Hindu and Sikh covered their head with a *dupatta*, when speaking to an elderly person. Muslim ladies, whenever they moved out, put on shroud or *burqa*.¹⁵¹ Waris Shah also refers *salu*, *chaddar* and *phulkari* as head cloth.

“*salu patre chadara bhaftee diyan,
naal bhoshna te phulkaria ney*”.¹⁵²

(Red shawls are like sheets wrought with gold and head clothes
embroidered in floral designs).

The upper part of the body was covered by a *kurti* or short shirt. The grown up girls and ladies used an additional garment known as *angiya*, *choli* or jacket, which was of various colours, cuts or designs. It was mainly of two types viz, one, short covering only the breast and the other long reaching down to the waist. They supported their breasts and pressed them upwards by a piece of linen which passed

¹⁴⁷ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 151; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, 81.

¹⁴⁸ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 4; *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; W Owen Cole and Piara singh, *The Sikhs Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1978, 109.

¹⁴⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 55.

¹⁵⁰ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 40; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 49.

¹⁵¹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 55.

¹⁵² Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S Sital), 74-75.

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under the arms and was made fast on the back. It was used by the rich and poor alike.¹⁵³

To cover the lower part of the body they wore *langha*, *saree* and trousers or *pyjama*. *Pyjama* was a coloured cloth, full and broad at the top and tight fitting at the ankles was popularly worn by women. It was made of a cloth called *susi*, and was generally striped in colour red and blue.¹⁵⁴ Among the Hindu ladies of trading classes, *petticoat* was more common. It was worn over the *pyjama* more especially in cold weather, or when they wished to be out from home. Their favorite colour for *petticoat* was red or brick dust, yellow or green border. It was usually made of a cloth called *tausila*, which was stripped like *susi*.¹⁵⁵ They also wore full trousers called *suthan*.¹⁵⁶ The Muslim ladies wore *mujla* (tying somewhat differently to the men) and this is usually a coloured *lungi*.¹⁵⁷ The women of the Punjab were very fond of *lungi*, which they wore with silken loose *kurta*. A Punjabi poet Damodar referred *lungi* very beautifully.

“*lungi manjh banney panjtaani,*

utte paat handaye”.¹⁵⁸

(Heer wears a lungi with a five stripes and silk shirt).

Common dress of the Sikh women consisted of a *salwar*, *kameez* or *kurti* with a *dupatta*. The *salwar* was made of cotton, silk or brocade. It was loose trousers which resembled a *pyjama*, wider at the top, narrow at ankle. Fazl Shah a famous *qissakar* of Lahore depicted this dress in his *qissa*.

“*gall paa kurti,utte deye chumin,*

paai mashru dee teer salwar usde”.¹⁵⁹

(Sohni wears shirt and cover her head with scarf and trousers of *mashru*

(a kind of cloth).

¹⁵³ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 48; P.N. Chopra, *Social Life Under the Mughals*, 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 55; Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1784)*, Munsiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1967, 146.

¹⁵⁵ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 55.

¹⁵⁶ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 40; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic of the Punjab*, 58.

¹⁵⁷ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 58.

¹⁵⁸ Damodar, *Heer Ranjha*, (ed. Kulbir Singh Kang), Ruhi Parkashan, Amritsar, 1994, 266.

¹⁵⁹ Fazal Shah, *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal* (ed. Manjit Singh), Aarshi Publishers, Delhi, 2006, 32; Cole Woven and Piara Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs*, 109.

Women of royalty and nobility wore elegant and costly dresses. The material used in their dresses was usually silk, muslin, *pashmina* and brocade. Their dresses were embroidered with gold and silver. In the contemporary paintings, ladies of the Lahore Darbar were shown attired in painted drawers, tight fitting and ornamented shirts which were covering down to the waist. They were also shown attired in a *ghagra*, bordered and embroidered. They used *dupatta* of silk to cover their head wrought with silver or gold threads.¹⁶⁰ Maharani Jindan in a contemporary painting shown wearing yellow veil and brownish red blouse.¹⁶¹

The dancing girls of the Lahore Darbar were magnificently dressed. They wore coloured silk trousers fitted tightly below, and fastened round the waist. Over the trousers they wore a tunic or *ghagri* of white muslin reaching half way down the legs. A shawl was put on the body. This dress was not appreciated by Hugel because it did not display their figure at best.¹⁶² While dancing, they wore wide, a gold threaded garment of various colours, covering them from shoulders to ankles. Osborne describing the dancing girls of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court states that "they were richly and gracefully dressed in scarlet and gold embroidered shawl dress with large and enormously loose *petticoats* of handsomely worked silk."¹⁶³ Maharaja Ranjit Singh, sometimes, converted his dancing girls into platoon called Amazons, dressed in men's attire. Syed Mohammad Waheeduddin describes their uniforms as follows:

*"A lemon yellow banarsi turban with a bejewelled crest, a dark green jamper (shirt) over a blue satin gown, fastened with a gold belt; deep crimson skin tight pyjamas of gulbadan silk; and a pair of pointed golden shoes".*¹⁶⁴

Ornaments attracted the attention of both male and female during our period. This was quite an important item for the decoration of the body. The love and craze of ornaments prompted by ostentation and self conceit was surely inherent in the human

¹⁶⁰ W.G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Plate no, 11, 12, 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Plate no. 97.

¹⁶² Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cahsmere and the Punjab*, 344.

¹⁶³ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 85, 86.

¹⁶⁴ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 178; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 199.

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race. This was probably necessitated by a primitive instinct to make one's person more impressive, imposing and beautiful. Besides attracting attention of others, the ornamentation fulfilled the craving of establishing a distinctive mark of sex, grandeur and dignity. The use of ornaments had a religious as well as ceremonial significance. It was for instance, a common belief of the Hindus that at least a speck of gold must be worn upon one's person to ensure ceremonial purity, and for the Muslims stones and settings had a magico- religious significance. Generally they would inscribe on their amulets the name of their religious head or most high, a Hindu draw and venerate the *swastika*.¹⁶⁵ To a married Hindu woman, in particular, her '*suhag*' signified the use of ornaments on almost all the limbs of her body from the tip to toe. It was only when she unfortunately became a widow that she threw away all her ornaments.¹⁶⁶

In society women had always shown weakness and anxiety to bedeck, may even load themselves with a huge variety of heavy ornaments. They were more particular about their jewellery than men. They adorned themselves with various ornaments for the head, ears, nose, neck, arms, wrists, fingers, ankles and feet. All ornaments were not necessarily of gold. They could also be made of brass, zinc and silver etc., in accordance with the demand and financial condition of person. Waris Shah mentioned 35 kinds of ornaments in his *qissa*. Importance of ornaments was also shown in the literature written during eighteenth century such as *Jhagra Tilli te Long da* and *Jhagra Sone te Chandi da*.

Women and men used to put on ornaments right from their childhood. They used to get their ears and nose, particularly girls, pierced through in their early childhood. Every male child of Hindus and Sikhs was adorned with a silver or gold chain with bells tied round the waist called *taragi*, and anklets round the ankles at a very tender age.¹⁶⁷ Among the poor classes *taragi* was made with black thread attached with or adorned with some beads or stones.

¹⁶⁵ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 14.

¹⁶⁶ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 217; M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals*, 35; G.S Sethi, "Women's Ornaments in Later Medieval Age in Northern India", *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, 87.

¹⁶⁷ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 16.

Young women decorated their heads with *sirphul* called *chaunk*. It was raised bell shaped piece of gold and silver, hollow and decorated from inside with attachments to hair over the crown the head. An ornament of big chain made of rows of pearls separated by jewelled studs, hanging from the head on one side was called *mauli*. *Phul* was another head ornament which was like a hemispherical boss and set with jewel. *Bindi* was small tinsel used on the forehead particularly by Hindu ladies. *Sirmang* or *tika* was a chain and pendant used for decorating the forehead.¹⁶⁸ *Sarpech* or *jighah* and *kalgi* (plume) was used by the young men. All were worn in front of turban.¹⁶⁹ At the wedding, Hindu wore *mukat*.¹⁷⁰

Ears were usually adorned with pendants made of gold silver or even copper, and hung down from ears to shoulders. *Karnphul*, shaped like the flower magrela, was very popular among the ladies.¹⁷¹ *Jhumka* was like a hollow ball to the ends of which were suspended small pendants of gold and mostly affixed in the lower part of the *karnphul*. Fazl Shah has referred *jhumka* as follow:

“*kanni sohnian jhumkian jhumak layi,*
chand chamkda jiwen asmani”.¹⁷²

(*Jhumke* are shine in the ears of Sohni, as the moon shines in sky).

A set of rings to be worn on the entire edge of ear was known as *vali*. Ladies wore on big and a few small rings on each ear.¹⁷³ *Peepal vatti* or *pipal pati* resembled *murki*, having a pendent to it ending in a fringe of little gold *pipal* leaves.¹⁷⁴ Men bedecked their ears with several kinds of ear rings. The ruling class, nobility and upper strata adorned their ears with *bala*, genenrally made of gold, inlaid with pearls, diamonds and other precious stones. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was shown in a near contemporary

¹⁶⁸ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 339; G.S. Sethi, “Women Ornaments in Later Medieval Age in Northern India”, 91; Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Indian Jewellery Cultural*, Vol. II, Pbg House, Delhi, 1984 (First Pb.1909), 156-157; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D, 311.

¹⁶⁹ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 203; W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh*, 162; Sahai Singh, *Var Hari Singh Nalwa*, (ed.)Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*, 108.

¹⁷⁰ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 338.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 338; Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India*, 126; G.S. Sethi, “Women’s Ornaments in Later Medieval Age in Northern India”, 91.

¹⁷² Fazal Shah, *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal*, 34.

¹⁷³ Qadir Yar, *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal*, 83; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 15.

¹⁷⁴ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 339; Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Indian Jewellery Cultural*, Vol. II, 49; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, 311.

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painting, wearing *balas*.¹⁷⁵ Small *balis* were also worn. With *bala*, a *zanjiri* or chain was also worn to keep it up. Maharaja Kharak Singh was shown wearing chain with *balas*.¹⁷⁶ *Murki* small ring and *jhumka* was also worn. Agra Sethi referred both as follows.

“dohan kanna andar jhumke latkan,
moti jarre sawavey,
kahun jee vala murki den nazara,
na koi keemat paye.”¹⁷⁷

(In the ears of Haqiqat Rai, precious *jhumkas* and *murkis* were hanging, with pearls embedded; it is not valued as much).

Nose was decorated with various ornaments. The nose ornaments were unknown in ancient India. It was brought into India by the Muslim invaders in the early medieval period. There is no reference to *nath* or any other nose ornaments in the pre- Muslim literature, and all painting and sculptures of the Hindu period do not show these ornaments.¹⁷⁸ However it soon became the fashion to put a gold ring and other nose ornaments among the women. Among these ornaments *nath* had occupied an important place. It was a ring to be passed through the left nostril and it consisted of a piece of gold wire usually adorned at the center with pearls and garnets. Mostly it had a ruby between the two jewels.¹⁷⁹ The women also used a gold and silver nose pin of the shape of *laung*, *koka* or a flower bud. It was a small stud of a single diamond or ruby fixed at the corner of the left nostril.¹⁸⁰ A small pendant, shaped and looking like the spread out tail of peacock was called *morni*. Another pendant put on the *nath* and stringing from it was described as *latkan*. *Phuli*, a small ring with a diamond of usually green colour and *bohr*, a pendant of gold leaves were also

¹⁷⁵ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Figure no. 17, 19; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 338.

¹⁷⁶ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Figure, no. 21.

¹⁷⁷ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 17.

¹⁷⁸ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 15; M.P. Srivastva, *Social Life Under the Great Mughals*, 36.

¹⁷⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 340; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab, A Socio- Cultural Study*, Ph.D Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1988, 60.

¹⁸⁰ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 340; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab, A Socio- Cultural Study*, 60.

worn.¹⁸¹ Another nose ornament which was very famous among the women was *bulak* which was worn in the partition between the two nostrils. Waris Shah has also referred *bulak*:

“*jisde naak bulak jewon kutab tara.*”¹⁸²

(Heer wore *bulak* in her nose as a star).

The other two nose ornaments were called *machhlian be sir* and *be sar*. The former resembled the shape of a headless fish and latter was a broad piece of gold embedded with a jewel on the upper end and a gold wire clasped on to the pearl on the other end, and well suspended from the nose.¹⁸³

Necklace of several varieties were worn by both women and men. Men and women who belonged to upper class wore necklaces of diamonds, pearls, gold and other precious stones, some of which were very large. A necklace with a big number of chains was called *har* or *chandan har* and *zanjiri*, a necklace of pearls and beads was known as *mala*, hanging down long and loose.¹⁸⁴ *Mohan mala* another necklace with large gold beads, with an interval of gold twisted thread between each head.¹⁸⁵ In the contemporary paintings Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh, Maharani Jindan and other members of royalty were shown in wearing long and precious necklaces.¹⁸⁶ *Jugni* was another ornament adorned their neck. It was a single jewelled pendant hanging from a string of silk worn both by men and women. Another necklaces worn by women were *has kari*, a collar of gold or silver, thick in middle thin at either end.¹⁸⁷ *Champakali*, meant buds of *champa* with many small golden beads hung into it.¹⁸⁸ *Guluband* was tightly fitted round the neck. It consisted of five or seven rose

¹⁸¹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 339-340; Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Indian Jewellery Cultural*, Vol. II, 49-50; S.P. Sangar, “Female Ornaments of the Nineteenth Century”, *Punjab History Conference*, Punjabi University Patiala, 1968, 194.

¹⁸² Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S Sital), 37.

¹⁸³ S.P. Sangar, “Female Ornaments of the Nineteenth Century Punjab”, 194; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio- Cultural Study*, 60.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Indian Jewellery Cultural*, Vol. II, 50; H.R. Gupta *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 581.

¹⁸⁵ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 341; Fazal Shah, *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal*, 34.

¹⁸⁶ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, figure no. 12, 17, 21, 22, 23, 28, 41, 97.

¹⁸⁷ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 340; G.S. Sethi, “Women’s Ornaments in Later Medieval Age in Northern India”, 91.

¹⁸⁸ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under the Later Mughlas*, 254; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 340.

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shape buttons of gold strings or silk.¹⁸⁹ *Atrdan* was a square jeweled pendant, attached to a silk chain, with small box at the back containing *atr* or perfume.¹⁹⁰ Sometimes, rich man invested their money in the shape of a string of gold called *mohurs*, and worn round their neck. A tighter necklace of hollow gold beads, or even as pair of gold bangles being worn when it is wished to make a show.¹⁹¹

Arms were decorated with various armlets and bracelets by both men and women. The upper part of the arm was embellished with an armlet called *bazuband* usually two inches wide, inlaid with jewels, diamonds etc. with a bunch of pearls hung down.¹⁹² *Bazuband* was also called *nau ratan*, consisting of a band of nine gems set side by side and tied by silk ties.¹⁹³ An amulet, usually known as *taviz* was often worn by the Muslims which secures protection against an evil eye.¹⁹⁴ Men also wore broad armlets with decorative designs. In the contemporary paintings Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his courtiers were shown with decorated arms with armlets of the most costly diamonds.¹⁹⁵

Kangan or *kara*, *churies* and *gajrah* (bangles) were adorned as bracelet. *Kangan* was a variety of the bracelet, surmounted with small knobs. Qadir Yar refers *kangan* in the following words.

“*hathin kangan shish dey paye.*”¹⁹⁶

(Sohni wears *kangan* (bracelet) of glass in her hands).

Women decorated their wrists up to the elbows with bracelets called *churies*, generally ten or twelve in number of each arm. They were generally made of a flat

¹⁸⁹ Rekha Mishra, *Women in Mughal India*, 127; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 340; Tejinder Kaur *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio- Cultural Study*, 82.

¹⁹⁰ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 341; S.P. Sangar, “Female Ornaments of the Nineteenth Century Punjab”, 194; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Social and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, 312; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 82.

¹⁹¹ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-84*, 40.

¹⁹² W.C. Archer, *Paintings of Sikhs*, fig no. 21, 22, 23, 24.

¹⁹³ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 34; S.P. Sangar, “Female Ornaments of the Nineteenth Century Punjab”, 196; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 100.

¹⁹⁴ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 34.

¹⁹⁵ W.C. Archer, *Paintings of Sikhs*, fig no. 17, 18., 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 36; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 194.

¹⁹⁶ Qadir Yar, *Sohni Mahiwal*, 83; Tejinder Kaur *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 97, 99.

ribbon of gold or silver, bent round.¹⁹⁷ Glass bangles have also much socio-religious significance among the Hindus. In case it broke, when the husband was alive it was considered inauspicious and it would never be called 'broken'. A widow would break the bangles with her own hands immediately on the death of her husband. Married girls wore white and red bangles called *chura* as it signified their newly married status.¹⁹⁸ Even a married girl was always blessed with the expression '*vajra chuda mani*' (may enjoy long married life).¹⁹⁹ Men also decorated their wrist with *kangan* or *kara*. Members of nobility and royalty used various types of bracelets. The Maharaja Ranjit Singh, usually, wore a single string of enormous pearls and the '*Koh-i-nur*' or mountain of light, on one of his arms.²⁰⁰

Fingers were adorned with rings, generally one ring for each finger. A ring studded with diamond was called *mundri* or *angushtri*. Shah Hussain describes *mundri* in the following words.

"*hathin mere mundri, main kam kyon kar rahi.*"²⁰¹

(I am wearing ring in my hands, why should I work).

Arsi was a popular thumb ring decorated with very small looking glass. Waris Shah describing the ornaments of Heer referred it as follow:

"*sohnian arsi naal anguthian dey*".²⁰²

(Beautiful thumb rings (*arsi*) were decorated with rings).

Chhala was another popular ring, plain hoop or whole hoop ring made of both silver and gold.²⁰³ Men also decorated their fingers with rings. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hira Singh and Kharak Singh were shown wearing rings in paintings of the period.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 341; M.P. Srivastva, *Social life Under the Great Mughals*, 37; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio- Cultural Study*, 99.

¹⁹⁸ Ramesh and Urmila Dogra, *Hindu and Sikh Wedding Ceremonies with Salient Features of Hindu and Sikh Rituals*, Star, New Delhi, 37; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 98.

¹⁹⁹ G.S. Sethi, "Women's Ornaments in Later Medieval Age in Northern India", 90.

²⁰⁰ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 73; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 205.

²⁰¹ Shah Hussain, *Shah Hussain Jiwan Te Rachna*, 74; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 343.

²⁰² Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S Sital), 74; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 105.

Material Comforts

Anklets were decorated with *jhanjar*, made of large hollow ring tied around the ankles. It produced a charming sound when the wearer walks. *Pajeb* or *panjeb* was another ankle ornament made of chains and pendants of silver. *Zanjiri* was usually a sort of chains with broad claps. *Bichhwas* was exclusively for instep.²⁰⁵

Besides above mentioned ornaments, women to enhance their beauty used a number of other things. Hindu ladies considered auspicious to put a vermillion mark (*sindur*) as a symbol of married in their heads. *Kajal* (collyrium) and *surma* (antimony) prepared from various herbs was applied to add beauty. Several poetic descriptions of the collyrium applied to the eyes can be found in the literature as Bulle Shah writes.

“*aakhiyan kajal kaale badal*”.²⁰⁶

(Eyes with collyrium are like dark clouds).

Women painted their hands and feet with *mehndi* (henna), and to reddened their lips and teeth used *missi* and chew the betel-leaves, which served them as a lip-stick.

“*hathin mehandi perran mehandi -----*

-----paanan da beer dandi missi laaei”.²⁰⁷

(She painted her hands and feet with heena and chew betal leaf
and use *missi* for teeth).

Datun was also used as tooth brush. It rendered the breath agreeable and also strengthened the gums.

Thus we can say that the study of material comforts help us in comprehending the status of various classes in the society. The people of all classes enjoyed different types of living standards. From these comforts, one can easily judge their economic as

²⁰³ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 343; S.P. Sangar, “Female Ornaments of the Nineteenth Century Punjab”, 197; Tejinder Kaur, *Jewellery of the Punjab: A Socio-Cultural Study*, 105.

²⁰⁴ W.G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, 17, 18, 19, 21.

²⁰⁵ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S Sital), 74; Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 343; Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Indian Jewellery Cultural*, Vol. II, 50.

²⁰⁶ Bulleh Shah, *Qafian* (ed. Bikram Singh Ghuman), Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2002, 166.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

well as their social status. In village for instance, peasants and artisans had small and *kucca* house with one room and small courtyard. They used courtyard for multi-purposes. Their families spent more than half of the day in the courtyard. And for women, courtyard was like a stage where they performed various duties. Only rich and influential people had *pucca* house with two or three rooms and sometimes double storey. Artisans lived in separate localities. The residences of the *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *sunars* and the *julahas* were generally within the precincts of the village. The untouchables or low classes lived outside the village and such houses were identified as *thattis* or *chamarhli*. Dwellings in the cities were more congested and multi-storeyed because of less space. In well to do families one room generally the one room was used as *baithak* where male guests were received. A raised platform or *thara* was main the centre of attraction in the cities because number of works such as spinning, sewing, embroidery and gossiping or quarrelling was performed in this part of the house. Traders and merchants used their houses for dual purpose, business and residence. The royalty and member of ruling class lived in palatial houses, which were like big mansions called *havelis*. They spent huge money in construction of their dwellings. They also built rest houses or small orchards called *bagichis* for their pleasure at different places. Decoration was main the feature of dwellings which was generally done by the women. Common people decorated their walls with the images of mythological characters or with some images of animals, in which peacock had important place because it symbolized happiness. Carpets, hangings, mirrors and curtains were additions to the living areas of the wealthy. Number of superstitions was followed while constructing the houses.

Wheat, maize and rice consisted staple food of the Punjab. Common people lived on simple food. *Khichari* and *churi* was mainly eaten by them. Milk and milk products were commonly used. *Sarson ka sag* with *makki ki roti* was favourite dish among the Punjabis during winters. During the festive occasions various types of sweetmeats were prepared. Goat, chicken and beef was a main part of the diet of the Muslims. The Hindus and Sikhs were generally vegetarian; Sikhs were permitted to take *jhatka* meat. To make food more spicy variety of pickles and spices were used. Usually three times meals was taken a day. The diet of wealthier classes contained rich variety of dry fruits and exotic spices. Well planned and luxurious royal kitchen, with a large number of officials and subordinate staff were maintained by nobility.

Material Comforts

Fruits, dry-fruits, sweetmeats, pickles and meat were main component of diet. Royalty and common man was very much fond of intoxicants such as opium, hump, Charas, *post* and different varieties of wine. Drinking parties were organized by the nobility. They were even allowed to distill liquor without any restriction.

Dresses, clothes and costumes regarded as one of the best ways to distinguish social class, sexes, occupations and religious groups. A *kurta*, *langota* or *pyjama* and a *chaddar* was usually common dress of men. While on working hours these garments were discarded. *Lungi* was common dress among men and women. For a woman a *kurti*, *ghagra*, *salwar* and *dupatta* were ideal dress. *Phulkari* was commonly used by the women. Material used for their clothes were home-grown. Religious classes of all religions were easily identified with their distinctive dresses. The dresses of royalty and nobility were made of silk, brocade, muslin and *pashmina*. They spent huge money on their dresses. In Lahore Darbar, court colour was yellow and on festive occasions every one was ordered to attire in yellow. Maharaja Ranjit Singh though dressed in simple, but he liked to be surrounded by well-dressed and richly embellished people. *Raja* Suchet Singh's semi-military and semi-court costume in Lahore Darbar fascinated everyone. Even the European officers were identified with their different dresses. Maharaja Ranjit Singh borrowed idea of uniform of army from British, and brought some changes in his army. Every unit of his army could be distinguished by colour of its uniform. Ornaments and jewellery attracted both sexes. They enhanced individual's beauty, established distinctive mark of sex, splendour and grandeur. Among Hindus ornaments had ritualistic as well as social significance. For a Hindu woman it indicated her marital status. Even from infancy ornaments were adorned. It seemed that royalty and nobility had great passion for wearing ornaments. Maharaja Ranjit Singh usually wore a big diamond koh-i-nur on his arms and his courtiers were also fully loaded with different types of jewellery. Special consideration was paid to dress and jewellery on festivals and on ceremonial observances on different occasions.

CHAPTER- V

MEANS OF ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION

Society is characterized by its means of recreation and entertainment. These are the images of the character, valour, values, beliefs and attitudes of the members of the society. Each society expresses itself through celebration of its fairs and festivals and performing arts, fine arts and several other descriptive and ascriptive ways. People relieve their tensions and stresses of life by dancing, singing, organizing fairs, participating in festivals, playing games and entertaining themselves on various social and religious occasions. The society of Punjab is known for its chivalry, bravery, openness, transcending religious affiliations and beliefs. Punjab like other regions of India, too had its characteristics and cultural traits as reflected in its fairs at regional, sub-regional and local level, festivals, dance forms, games, various style of singing, folk traditions and other forms of entertainments. These aspects of the cultural fabric were woven around the socio-cultural and economic traits of the region. The fairs and festivals served a twin purpose: religious and social. To a devout, a visit to holy place and a dip in the sacred waters continues to be the means of attaining religious merit but to a common man these have social and economic significance too. In the early nineteenth century Punjab, the means of communications were slow and primitive and the fairs and festivals served as a meeting ground for people. These also helped in obliterating minor, local and provincial differences. A fair provided an opportunity and space for the organization of an elaborate village market so that the people make necessary purchase of house-hold goods and other things that were otherwise brought from the nearest urban market. A bustling market sprang up, in which articles of food, products of local handicrafts, toys, glass bangles and an assortment of all kinds of articles for domestic use were on display. There were swings, acrobats, jugglers, wrestlers, actors, singers and dancers. They entertained the multitude with their performances.

Going by the Gregorian calendar, *lohri* the mid winter event is the first festival of the New Year. It falls on the last day of the month of *poh* of *bikrami* calendar in mid

January when the Sun touches the southern most point on the ecliptic and the duration of the night is the longest. The word *lohri* seems to be originated from the word *loh* and *ari*, literally meaning iron foe or black foe, suggestive of the long and dreadful night.¹

Lohri was observed all over the Punjab. It was associated with the mythical story of Dulla Bhatti, who rescued a girl from her cruel abductors and arranged her marriage.² A week or so before the *lohri* night, young boys and girls move from door to door, sing a special song and collect money, sweets and other eatables. Even the passerby was not spared. The money thus collected was spent on some eatables significant for this day such as *chirwe* (parched rice partially boiled with the husk, then flattened and parched), *reori* (sweets or small balls of solidified sugar covered with sesame) and *gajak* (a kind of sweetmeat made from sugar paste and sesame seed) and *khoya* (condensed milk) and groundnuts.³ Bonfire of the collected pieces of woods takes place after the sunset. This was a special day for making offerings to fire. The *lohri* fire was symbolic of the homage to the Sun. It was believed that flames of the fire that lit at *lohri* convey their message to the Sun for bringing warmth and taking away the cold weather. Men and women moved round the fire pour offerings into it and bow before it in reverence.⁴ For peasantry, *lohri* marked the beginning of the new financial year because on this day they settled the division of the produce of land between themselves and tillers.⁵

Lohri was also celebrated in Lahore Darbar with great rejoicings. On this occasion, Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to dress himself in yellow garments. Royal orders were issued in the names of the close attendants to present themselves in the Darbar in yellow attires.⁶ The Maharaja granted robes of honour to chieftains,

¹ Ramesh Chander and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, UBS Publihers, New Delhi, 2003, 270.

² Bikram Singh Ghuman and Charanjit Singh Gumtala, *Dulla Bhatti*, Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2005, 7.

³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 449; Parkash Tandon, *Punjab Century (1857-1947)*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1963, 96; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1971, 79.

⁴ Ramesh Chander and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 270.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 79.

⁶ Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, (tr. Amarwant Singh, eds. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga), Daftar II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 146, 377.

employees, *vakils* and others on this day. In 1832, suits of clothes with pearl necklaces were granted to Raja Hira Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Charat Singh and Karam Singh, sons of Partap Singh.⁷ At night dancing girls who were dressed in yellow, performed music and dance and were rewarded by the Maharaja in cash.⁸ Continuing the tradition of Lahore Darbar Maharaja Sher Singh also celebrated *lohri*. He distributed rewards among his *khidmatgars* and attendants. A huge bonfire was lit at night.⁹

Maghi falls on the next day of *lohri*, that is, 14th January on the first day of the month of *magh* of the *bikrami* calendar. *Maghi mela* is also associated with the commemoration of the martyrdom of the *chali mukta* (the forty immortals) who died fighting with the Mughal forces near Khidrana (Muktsar) in 1705-06. On this day a number of fairs were held at many places in the Punjab and the most famous one was held at Muktsar. People went out for a holy dip and gave away money in charity. The special dish of the day was *kheer* cooked in sugarcane juice.¹⁰ On the day of *maghi* Maharaja Ranjit Singh made it a point to visit Amritsar to take a sacred bath in Harmandir Sahib.¹¹ Sometimes he celebrated *maghi* at Katas and took a sacred bath there in the holy tank.¹² Sohan Lal Suri, describes the *maghi* festival in the following words:

*“On the day of maghi, the Maharaja distributed alms and charities among the poor and the deserving and gave cash donations to Harmandir Sahib and to Akalbunga”.*¹³

On this occasion Maharaja also listened Granth Sahib and made an *ardas*.¹⁴ Various chiefs and nobles offered *nazars* to him and received robes of honour. In

⁷ *Ibid.*, (tr.Vidya Sagar Suri), Daftar III (I-III),146; Daftar III (I-III) II, 352; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 450.

⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 79; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 450.

⁹ *Ibid.*, (tr.Vidya Sagar Suri), Daftar IV (III), 301.

¹⁰ Ramesh Chander and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 274; S.S Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 75, 80.

¹¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 132, 152, 315, 337, 400; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed.) Jil Singh Sital, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, 262.

¹² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 84, 149.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 315, 316.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (IV-V) 374; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 450.

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1835, for example, Raja Hira Singh offered rupees 125, Jamadar Khushal Singh rupees 121, Sardar Wasava Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh 100 rupees each.¹⁵ On this day, an elephant and some clothes, as usual, and rupees 21,000 in cash were given away in charity.¹⁶ Kanwar Sher Singh was granted 15 garments as robe of honour in 1836, on the *maghi* day.¹⁷

Tuladan and *samkalap* was also performed. Money and suits of clothes were granted to the princes and others as *samkalap* to distribute among the deserving and Brahmans.¹⁸ In 1839, the golden pitchers offered as *samkalap* on the *maghi* day were distributed among Tarn Taran, Ber Babaji at Sialkot, the free kitchen of Sodhi Jagram Dass, the flute player, and the free kitchen of the *granthies*.¹⁹

Basant a seasonal festival, takes place on the fifth day of the light half of the lunar month of *magh* (January-February). It is the harbinger of Spring when the weather begins to warm up and nature starts pulsating with new life, plants begin to sprout and blossom.²⁰ According to Hindu scriptures, *basant* is celebrated in the honour of Saraswati, the Goddess of fine art and literature. It is also associated with the worship of Lord Vishnu, the God of preservation.²¹

Basant was observed with great rejoicing in the Punjab. Fields of mustard presented a unique and colourful sight in all the rural areas which looked like a newly wedded damsel resplendent in her gorgeous golden yellow. From the fact that the yellow leaves of the mustard plants were in bloom, it was customary for all to attire in *basanti* (yellow colour clothes) and put some mustard seeds in their caps and turbans.²² Yellow food or food mixed with saffron was especially prepared. The *vasant rag* or spring song was sung and its special virtue is said to be the giving of an

¹⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 273.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 355.

¹⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 79.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 377.

²⁰ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 238; Ramesh Chander and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 61.

²¹ P. Thomas, *Festivals and Holidays of India*, D.B. Tarapoevala, Bombay, 1971, 12.

²² *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 60; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 110; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 71.

impulse to the emotions of love and merriment.²³ Kites were flown and matches of kite flying were held. When the string of a kite was cut off, the sky echoed with cheers and the shouts of 'bo-kata' from the winning side.²⁴ In some place the cattle's horns were painted and decorated. In later period cattle fairs were also held in Punjab.²⁵

Basant was also associated with the martyrdom of Haqiqat Rai in the Punjab who on this day laid down his life for not accepting the Islam under coercion. A large fair of *basant* was held at his *samadh* near the village of Kot Khwaja Said and it was regarded as a place of pilgrimage.²⁶ The fair of *basant* was also held at the mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain in Baghwanpura about three miles from Lahore, near the Shalimar gardens.²⁷ Lal Husain was a holy man who wanted to make Madho his disciple. But in a few days Madho expired and his parents approached Lal Husain to restore their son to life. Lal Husain agreed on the condition that if their son Madho came to life again, they should allow him to become his disciple. Madho was revived by the sacred blessings of Lal Husain. They lived for sometimes and finally died together. In commemoration of their death a fair was held at their mausoleum.²⁸

Basant was celebrated with great *éclat* in the Lahore Darbar. The Maharaja ensured that all the chieftains, Sardars, *darbaris* and soldiers wore yellow robes.²⁹ It is interesting to know why the Maharaja celebrated this festival at the mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain.³⁰ Men of floorings (*farrash*) were ordered to set up tents, screen and canopies of yellow colour near the mausoleum.³¹ All the chieftains, *munshis*, *daftaries* and *vakils* were given order to present themselves at the mausoleum dressed

²³ C.H. Buck, *Faith, Fairs and Festivals of India*, Asian Publication Service, New Delhi, 1977, 82; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. I, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2008, 16-17.

²⁴ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 60; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 450; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 190.

²⁵ C.H. Buck, *Faith, Fairs and Festivals of India*, 80.

²⁶ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh 12; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga tr. and eds., *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, 154; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 451.

²⁷ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 60; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 119.

²⁸ Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Heart*, K. P Bagchi and Co., Calcutta, 1977, 18.

²⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 388, 438, 487; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, V.V.R.I., Hoshiarpur, 406.

³⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 438.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 487.

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in yellow robes, made of brocade, satin and gold woven cloth. On this day royal orders were issued to the commandants of the 'Campoo-i-Mualla' (royal camp), horsemen and platoons to put on yellow garments and stand in line beginning from Delhi gate to the mausoleum of Madho Lal Hussain.³²

On this day, at about the third quarter of the day the Maharaja came out in yellow, on a huge elephant with great pomp and show, passed through the Delhi gate and then went to the said mausoleum, surveying on the way the parade of the troops, entered his tent and took his seat in a golden chair under a well set canopy.³³ In 1832, Mohan Lal, a traveler, who was a witness to the celebrations of *basant* and has described the festivities in the following words:

*"The Maharaja's troops standing on the both sides of the road, forming a regular street, with their uniform basanti dress (of a yellow colour), to salute the King of the Punjab who was apparelled like wise in a basanti dress, accompanied by his "European" guests, proceeded to the tents which were made of yellow silk and ornamented with pearls where he was received with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy, _____ "Long live the good liege of the five rivers!" was the general cry. By the trotting of elephants and horses, the dust arose so thick that one could not see".*³⁴

To illustrate the pomp and show of *basant* celebrations further, an interesting description can be quoted from Baron Charles Hugel, a German traveller (1836) in the following words.

"The basant, literally the Spring, is a festival celebrated yearly in upper Hindustan and the Punjab. The sirsyas then covering the whole of the country with its blossoms. ----- Large crowd had formed round a talking or a singing faqir, a juggler or an astrologer, a vender of toys or sweetmeats. At another spot, grown up men were running about the fields with kites and multitudes of persons were seen following some

³² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 388, 438, 488; Daftar III (I-III), 242.

³³ *Ibid.*, 242.

³⁴ Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Heart*, 17, 18.

musicians who were beating their tamtams and blowing horns. One part of the court was divided from the rest by a kanat or canvas screen and there sat Ranjit Singh in an armchair under a large tent of Kashmir stuff, yellow like the carpet, himself and every thing about it. _ _ _ Large quantities of sirsyas and other yellow flowers were scattered about here and there. _ _ _ _ _ As the festival began, all had taken their seats. _ _ _ _ _ Each person being expected to offer some present to the Maharaja. On his (Maharaja Ranjit Singh) right hand sat Kharak Singh, on the left, the favourite, Raja Hira Singh- _____ and more to the left Sultan Mohammad Khan and his son who brought with them a present in gold. Behind the king stood the Jamadar, Suchet Singh and General Ventura while in the background were a number of the inferior state officers. Next came Sardars, Rajas and Khans from different provinces, all bringing gold. Most of the Muslim Sardars sat with their left hand resting on the ground. The garments they wore were most expensive and gorgeous, those of Ranjit Singh only excepted, who, as usual, was dressed in his plain wrapping-gown. The dancing girls were introduced all in yellow, and to them the Maharaja sent the silver money which had been presented to him".³⁵

The above descriptions of the foreign travellers gives a clear picture of the Lahore Darbar. The yellow was the colour of the Darbar on *basant*. The visitors were expected to take their seats according to their status and present themselves before the Maharaja with *nazars*. On this occasion all presented *nazars* to the Maharaja and in return received robes of honour according to their status.³⁶ The Maharaja also scrutinized the cavalry, the infantry and the artillery that were uniformly dressed in yellow and felt very pleased to receive the salute of his forces.³⁷ At night dancing girls engaged themselves in singing and dancing and received handsome rewards.

³⁵ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 339-41; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility of Lahore Darbar*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1981, 99.

³⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 286; Daftar III (IV-V), 380.

³⁷ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, 339; Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*

After *basant*, the most colourful and hilarious festival is *holi*, which is observed on the full moon day of the month of *phalgun* (February- March). It is a festival of colours.³⁸ Bingley identifies *holi* with *dola yatra* or the rocking of the image of Krishna which was celebrated especially in Hindustan and the Punjab, as a kind of Hindu carnival.³⁹ *Holi* also signified the triumph of good over evil, illustrated through the ageless story of Prahlad⁴⁰ who was a devout worshipper of Lord Vishnu, and survived all the attempts made on his life by his father Hiranyakashipu. When all methods of killing him failed, his wicked aunt Holika, believing herself immune to death by fire, leaped into a blazing furnace built for Prahlad's destruction. But Holika perished. The *holi* festival was believed to celebrate Holika's extermination symbolizing evil. The festival was also thought to symbolize the burning of mythological 'old year' since Lord Vishnu created the world on the day following *holi* full moon.⁴¹ This festival was marked by joyful singing, hilarious dancing and sprinkling of coloured powder and water. During the *holi* revellers, young and old, moved around the streets and bazars in groups throwing coloured water or rubbing red powder on everyone they met in the way. The boys danced in the streets and inhabitants of houses sprinkled the red powder, used squirts and played practical jokes. Towards the close of the festival, in the night of the full moon, a bonfire was lit.⁴² *Holi* was the occasion when people could reverse existing norms with impunity, the verbal and visual signs of social status were freely violated when social inferiors threw colour on their superiors.⁴³

In Lahore Darbar *holi* was celebrated with splendour and grandeur. Maharaja Ranjit Singh could celebrate *holi* wherever he wished to but usually it was celebrated

Together With a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus From the Sea of Lahore, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, 27, 28.

³⁸ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, 238; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 453.

³⁹ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 110; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. I, 91; Inderyas Bhatti, *Nobility of Lahore Darbar*, M.Phil Dissertation, 97.

⁴⁰ Kanwaljit Singh Kang, *Punjab Art and Culture*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1988, 157; Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religion Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, 186.

⁴¹ Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. III, Viva Books, New Delhi, 2008, 1551; B. K. Chaturvedi, *Faiths, Fairs and Festivals of India*, Abhishek Publication, Chandigarh, 2001, 79.

⁴² A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 110; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 453; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 96, 97.

⁴³ Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 187.

in Amritsar or Lahore. The preparations for *holi* were started many days before. Royal orders were issued to the *kardars* of Amritsar and Lahore for preparations of Lac dye and other requisites for *holi* and emphasized that it was a matter to be treated as urgent.⁴⁴ The nobles and *kardars* were also ordered for its preparations. In 1831, Misr Beli Ram was ordered to prepare all the requisites of *holi* like syringes of gold and silver and other things and show them to the Maharaja because the *holi* days were drawing very near.⁴⁵ For the preparation of celebrations enough money was granted. In 1830, a letter was issued to Hazari Badan, *kardar* of Amritsar for rupees 2,500 for the lac dye.⁴⁶ The level of celebrations can be understood from the amount allocated for this purpose. In 1832, Misr Beli Ram was ordered to give Raja Hira Singh rupees 500 every day in order to meet the expenses in connection with the *holi* celebrations.⁴⁷ The staff in-charge of flooring was ordered to arrange artistically white carpets for the celebration of the *holi*.⁴⁸

Maharaja Ranjit Singh held a grand Darbar on this occasion. All the chiefs, associates, *vakils*, Sardars and others were invited to participate in the *holi* festival.⁴⁹ They presented *nazars* to the Maharaja according to their ranks and status and in return received *khillats*.⁵⁰ After that celebrations of *holi* took place. The Maharaja played *holi* with his courtiers and others. He had all the arrangements made for merry making and enjoyment. Huge quantities of coloured powder and syringes of gold and silver were supplied to all chiefs and nobles. Baron Charles Hugel, narrates the celebration of *holi* at Lahore in March, 1836, as follows:

“A quantity of singhara meal dyed yellow, green, red and blue mixed up with little pieces of gold and silver tinsel, a number of large pots of water dyed with the same colours and little water-engines being set

⁴⁴ In 1825, a royal order was issued to Khalifa Nur-ud-din that, as the Maharaja intended to reach Lahore very soon, he must make ready Lac dye of various colours and other things necessary for the *holi*. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 407.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 12.

⁴⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 501; Daftar II, 238, 389, 403, 488, 501; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 454.

⁴⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 170.

⁴⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 501; Daftar III (IV-V), 8.

⁴⁹ Raja Ajit Singh was invited in 1835 for *holi* celebrations, while he was engaged in hunting. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 288.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 356; Daftar III (I-III), 13, 136, 407; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 453.

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near. Everyone appears in white garments, and the festival commences by the dancing girls sitting down, and breaking forth into a song in honour of the feast. The baskets of coloured meal are then introduced and thin glass balls full of singhara powder, are distributed to the assembly which they throw on each other and being broken with the slightest force discharge their contents on the white dresses, and stain them. Like all games of this description, these being gently, but soon assume a rougher aspect, each player seizing as many balls as he can, and flinging them at one another, when the glass balls are exhausted, they take the coloured meal, first, as much as the fingers can hold then by handfuls, and at last they empty the baskets over each other's heads, covering the whole person. The dirtiest part of the entertainment consists in the sprinkling with coloured waters".⁵¹

Another interesting account of the celebrations of the *holi* was given by Sir Henry Fane, the British commander in-chief who witnessed *holi* at Lahore in 1837. He states:

"Ranjit Singh was seated surrounded by his court and the guard of pretty Amazons, some thirty or forty in number, armed with bows and arrows, which they drew the moment the British party made its entry. In front of everyone were small baskets filled with small brittle balls containing red powder. Large bowls of thick yellow saffron stood along side. As soon as guests were seated, the Maharaja took a large butter-boat kind of article, filled it up with saffron and poured it on my (Henry Fane) bald head; while at the same time, the prime minister rubbed him over with gold and silver leaf, mixed with red powder. The Maharaja himself seemed to enjoy the fun as anyone, while the courtiers threw balls of saffron and red powder on each other,

⁵¹ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, 310-11.

*although few of them aimed at him personally. The battle raged for more than an hour”.*⁵²

Maharaja Ranjit Singh riding on an elephant also visited the interior of Lahore or of Amritsar which ever the case may be. The Maharaja, in 1826, turned his attention to have a round through the town of Lahore. He entered through the door of the mosque Roshni gate and went near the *haveli* of Raja Dhian Singh via Said Mitha and then passed by the *haveli* of prince, and then, passing through Shahalmi gate, Taxali and Moti bazar, went into the fort in comfort and ease.⁵³ He also played *holi* with the common people.⁵⁴ The people felt very happy to see the Maharaja and found the ‘aprons of their expectations filled with many kinds of favours’.⁵⁵

At about the third quarter of the day, the Maharaja inspected parade ground and distributed Lac dye and large sums of money. The platoons stood in lines on the right and left and the game of Lac-dye was enjoyed.⁵⁶ At night, dancing girls performed dance. Expert musicians beat the drum of joy and triumph and received large sums of money as reward.⁵⁷ In 1832, rupees 1,000 were given by way of reward to the dancing girls.⁵⁸ A discharge of cannons in honour of the *holi* took place.⁵⁹ The Maharaja also took security measures to keep peace during *holi* festival. He issued strict instructions to keep a vigilant watch and announce that disturbers of peace would be severely dealt with.⁶⁰

The successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh also celebrated *holi* with great enthusiasm. Orders were issued to the *kardars* of the Amritsar and of other various sides to prepare a few maunds of Lac dye of various colours of very fine and first rate

⁵² Henry Fane, *Five Years in India 1835-1839*, Henry Colburn, London, 1842, 172-75; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 408; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1964, 481.

⁵³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 441.

⁵⁴ In 1826, the citizens of Lahore were standing on the roofs of houses with Lac dye and syringes filled with coloured water. As the Maharaja entered the street, the splashed coloured water on him from balconies. Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed.) Jit Singh Sital, 24; Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 289, 320, 489; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 455.

⁵⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 289, 320.

⁵⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 44; Daftar III (I-III), 13,14, 364; H.L.O. Garrett, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 140.

⁵⁷ Suri, *Umdat* Daftar II, 289; Daftar III (I-III) 170-171.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 170-171.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 441.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, III (I-III) II, 290; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 456.

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quality.⁶¹ In 1840, both Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh engaged themselves in merrymaking and enjoyment. All the clerks, *vakils*, *khidmatgars*, commandants and other officers of platoons and troops of horsemen secured everlasting felicity by presenting gifts.⁶² The game of Lac dye was enjoyed accompanied by festivities and music of dancing girls.⁶³

The next day of *holi* was celebrated by the Sikhs at Anandpur Sahib called *hola mohalla*. The transformation of *hola mohalla* from *holi* was first initiated by Guru Gobind Singh. Instead of the *holi* festival being an occasion for colour splashing, the tenth Guru transformed it into an arena for training in warfare and gave it the masculine name of *hola mohalla*.⁶⁴ It was marked by mock fightings, military exercises, contests in swordsmanship, archery, wrestling and *gatka* (fencing). A large fair of *hola mohalla* was held at Anandpur Sahib and it was symbolic of martial arts valour and bravery.⁶⁵

In the afternoon of the second day, the devotees brought standards from their shrines. They were carried to the neighbouring stream, singing hymns and playing on musical instruments. The procession of worshippers clustering round their respective standards moved slowly accepting offerings and bestowing blessings on the devotees. The sight of the multi-coloured standards raised high up was attractive and charming. Many *nihangs*, mounted on horses, rushed wildly about, frantically gesticulating and shouting and posing themselves as defenders of their standard against a supposed foe.⁶⁶

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took all security measure to keep peace during this festival. In 1835, a worth obedience order was issued to Chet Singh commandant to go at once to Anandpur and control the situation there because the *holi* was drawing

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Daftar IV, 240.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Daftar IV, 113.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Daftar IV, 113, 185-186, 240.

⁶⁴ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 456; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *The The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Servey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 210.

⁶⁵ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh*, 388; H.S.Bhatia and S.R.Bakshi (ed.), *Encyclopedic History of The Sikhs and Sikhism*, Vol. III, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1999, 55; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 80.

⁶⁶ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 110-111; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 456.

near and the Maharaja did not want any disturbance and untoward incident to happen.⁶⁷

Nauroz is the most popular of all the Iranian festivals, heralding Spring and the beginning of the New Year. It falls on the first *farwardin*, the first month of the Persian year (20th or 21st of March) when the Sun enters the sign Aries.⁶⁸ Its observance is confined largely to the upper classes of the Muslims. But it is also celebrated by the people in general.⁶⁹ They spend their time in making merry, whitewash their houses, attire new clothes and enjoy the festival. It is a general belief that if this day is spent in merry making the whole year would pass happily.⁷⁰

Nauroz was observed in Lahore Darbar with great enthusiasm. Maharaja Ranjit Singh on this occasion ordered to spread out fine carpets and floorings.⁷¹ In 1820, a silver bungalow was set up in the Hazuri garden.⁷² On this occasion, like other festival days, all the chieftains, nobles and *vakils* of various parts presented themselves before the Maharaja putting on fine and rich dresses and offered *nazars* and gifts according to their ranks and capacity.⁷³ Sohan Lal Suri has described the celebration of *nauroz* as follow:

*“In 1828, on nauroz day, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Gulab Singh, Raja Suchet Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Sardar Wasawa Singh, Sardar Jawala Singh, Sardar Dhanna Singh Malwai, Mian Sukh Dyal and other glorious chieftains and nawab Sarfraz Khan and the vakils of Hyderabad, Khairpur, Dera Ismail Khan and nawab Rukun-ud-daula, all of them presented themselves before the Maharaja and offered gifts.”*⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 290.

⁶⁸ P.N. Chopra, *Society and Culture During Mughal Age*, Shiva Lal Agarwal and Co. Agra, 1963, 84; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 469.

⁶⁹ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 241; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughal (1526-1707)*, Thacker and Co., Bombay, 1968, 276.

⁷⁰ P.N. Chopra, *Society and Culture During Mughals Age*, 84; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 469.

⁷¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 338, 380; Daftar III (I-III), 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 322.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 136-137, 222, 322, 338, 390, 490.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 443.

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Not only the chieftains and nobles offered *nazars* to the Maharaja, even the commandants, *jamadars*, *havalgars*, *naiks* and officers of platoons, *topkhana* and regiments presented gifts to him.⁷⁵ In return they were awarded with robes of honour.⁷⁶

Inspections of troops were also held on this day. In 1828, the Maharaja inspected the *ghorachara*, orderlies and the troops of chieftains. He was much pleased to see the decoration of arms and garments of the troopers and horses.⁷⁷ Large sums of money and other things were also distributed among the poor, destitute and religious persons. In 1831, elephants, horses, suits of clothes, and other things like utensils of gold and silver were given to the Brahmans and the Akalis.⁷⁸ At night dancing girls performed their dance. In 1831, a royal order was issued to all the dancing girls in the town of Lahore to put up male garments, hold swords and bows in their hands and be decorated with other arms as well and then to present themselves at the *deorhi* of the Maharaja on elephants and horses in perfect smartness and with great grace.⁷⁹

Baisakhi is a seasonal festival with a special accent. Named after the second month, *baisakh*, falls on first day of *baisakh* (April). It is a day of great rejoicings in the rural areas of the Punjab because it marks the harvesting of *rabi* crop and the wheat is to commence from that day.⁸⁰ For the peasantry it is a long-awaited occasion to celebrate. They gather the fruit of their labour. It may be interpreted as a festival of renewal, the previous agricultural cycle has come to an end, a new one is about to begin. The conjunction of the festival with the commencement of harvest was not purely accidental. Technically the calendrical year or *desi saal* had begun a month earlier, in *chet*, but for the peasantry the year proper started only with *baisakh*.⁸¹ *Baisakhi* has a special significance for the Sikhs. At Anandpur Sahib, on this day in 1699, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, baptized the Sikhs into the Khalsa. To

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 390.

⁷⁶ In 1825 shawls and turbans were granted to the nobles and chieftains. Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, 143.

⁷⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 443; Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, 143.

⁷⁸ Suri, *Umdat* III (I-III), 19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁰ Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. I, 258; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 71.

⁸¹ Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 183-84; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 457.

commemorate the day, a large number of Sikhs flock to Harmandir Sahib and take a holy bath in the sacred tank.⁸²

Baisakhi festivities were marked by a visit to a local fair, feasting, singing and dancing. A *baisakhi* fair was held on the bank of river Ravi in Lahore. It lasted for two days and about thousands of people assembled there in their best costume.⁸³ The *baisakhi* fair at Amritsar was held amidst great rejoicings and was attended by the people from remote places. All *bungas* or hospices round the sacred tank and all the semi-religious seminaries (*akharas*) or rest houses were packed to the full by visitors on this day.⁸⁴ The people moved about in the fair jumping, singing and dancing.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh solemnized *baisakhi* with great rejoicings and merriments. He visited Harmandir Sahib on this day, took holy bath in sacred tank, listened Granth Sahib, made an *ardas* and performed *parkarma*. Large sums of money were offered to Harmandir Sahib on this occasion.⁸⁵ In 1824, the Maharaja gave, by the way of an offering, rupees 1,500 to Harmandir Sahib and rupees 500 to Akal *bunga*.⁸⁶ He also performed *tuladan* and *samkalap* on this day. For this purpose money, gold, silver, clothes and animals were kept ready.⁸⁷ In 1838, the Maharaja gave to Nau Nihal Singh for the *samkalap* of the *baisakhi* day rupees 1,100, two gold pitchers, some robes of honour and much more.⁸⁸ After performing *tuladan* and *samkalap*, writes Sohan Lal Suri, aprons of the poor and deserving were filled with large sums of money. In 1821, the Maharaja gave alms and charities to the needy and the deserving in cash, kind, vessels of gold and silver amounting to rupees 50,000. In addition to it one rupee was sent to the house of every Brahman of Lahore, Amritsar and other area under his sway.⁸⁹

⁸² Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 50, 130; Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 183.

⁸³ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 60.

⁸⁴ *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-1884*, 24; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 113.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 390-91, 444; Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, 16, 164; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 458.

⁸⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 380-81, 444.

⁸⁷ *Tuladan* - weighted against amount. *Samkalap* - a ritual by which one forsake cash, gold, money and any article for religion and ritual purpose. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 340; H.R. Gupta, *History of Sikhs*, Vol. V 458; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 406.

⁸⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 109.

⁸⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 340.

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All the chieftains, Sardars, *vakils* and *munshis* were also ordered to leave for Amritsar for this occasion.⁹⁰ In 1832, letters were issued to Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia and Fakir Imam-ud-din to clear Ram Bagh, set right its buildings, to equip Gobindgarh fort and to discharge guns on the arrival of the Maharaja.⁹¹ All the chieftains, *darbaris* and other presented *nazars* and received *khillats* from the Maharaja according to their ranks.⁹² In 1827, at Amritsar for instance, Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted the installation mark of Rajaship to *mian* Dhian Singh and also awarded him the title of ‘*Raja-i-Rajgan*’, ‘*Raja-i-Hindpat*’, ‘*Raja Dhian Singh Bahadur*’.⁹³ At night great illumination took place to enhance the mirth of jovial society. The Maharaja spent his night in his own *bunga* and engaged himself in surveying and inspecting the pleasant illuminations and festoons and remained busy in watching crowds of ordinary folk.⁹⁴

Dussehra called *vijay dashmi* originated from the Ramayana is held on the 10th lunar day of *asu* (September-October). It is also known as *durga puja* or *durgautsava* (feast of Durga). This is a ten days festival; in which nine nights are spend in worship of Goddess Durga and tenth day in the celebration in the honour of Durga.⁹⁵ *Dussehra* is connected with Autumn equinox. It marks the victory of Lord Ram Chander over Rawan and Durga over a demon.⁹⁶

The festival of *dussehra* was observed in the Punjab with great pomp and show. A fair was held on the parade ground in front of the Lahore fort.⁹⁷ First nine days, the people amused themselves with the theatrical shows called *ram lila*, which were held to memorize the early skirmishes between Lord Ram Chander and

⁹⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 340; Daftar III (IV-V) II, 107.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, III (I-III) II, 174.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 340.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 418; Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, 184.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 340, 380, 391, 403, 444, 475-76.

⁹⁵ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 239; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopadia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. III, 1510; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopadic Servey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 130.

⁹⁶ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 117; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 463; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 202; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. I, 15.

⁹⁷ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 61; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 463; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 280.

Rawan.⁹⁸ On the tenth day of celebration, the final ceremony of the festival was performed. The huge effigies of Rawan, Kumbkaran and Meghnath were raised up. A great concourse of people assembled to see the effigies. The effigies were burnt amidst a great noise of fire works and crackers. The explosion of gun powder filled in the effigies announced the victory.⁹⁹ *Dussehra* was very popular among the peasantry and craftsmen.¹⁰⁰

The festival of *dussehra* was celebrated with great pomp and show during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Celebration of *dussehra* was, politically, the most important among the festivities at the Lahore Darbar. The victory of Lord Ram Chander over Rawan was celebrated with the display of might and military power of the Maharaja. A special Darbar was held on this day and had its own splendour and grandeur. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was skillful in utilizing this festival to inculcate a sense of loyalty among nobles and vassals towards his person and the family.¹⁰¹ We get numerous references in the *daftars* of *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*. Before *dussehra* the letters of invitations were sent to all the chieftains, nobles, vassals, counsellors, tributaries and hill chiefs to present themselves along with one horse with golden saddles and some gold ducats by way of *nazar* at the *dussehra* Darbar in expression of their allegiance and fidelity to the Maharaja. If anyone showed delay or procrastination in this matter could become a target for the displeasure of the Maharaja.¹⁰² In 1832, for instance, letters were issued to Raja Gulab Singh, Diwan Kirpa Ram,¹⁰³ and in 1833 letters were issued to the Rajas of Poonch, Rajauri, Kulu, Mandi and Sardars and *kardars* of the dominions that they should send their *vakils* with ducats, sums in cash and horses with golden saddles as usual to the Maharaja for the *dussehra* celebrations.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, V.V.R.I., Hoshiarpur, 1975, 91; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 99; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 239; C.H. Buck, *Faith, Fairs and Festivals of India*, 101.

⁹⁹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 463; O.P. Ralhan, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol II, 664.

¹⁰⁰ G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 91; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 239; C.H. Buck, *Faith, Fairs and Festivals of India*, 101.

¹⁰¹ Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 415.

¹⁰² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar, II, 430-31, 453; Daftar III (I-III) 94, 233; Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, 262; H.R. Gupta, *History of Sikhs*, Vol. V, 464.

¹⁰³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II 191-192.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, III (I-III) II, 233.

Elaborate arrangements were made to celebrate *dussehra*. Royal orders were issued to the staff in-charge of floorings to spread and fix up all the ‘Sky kissing tents’, gold and silver threaded “Be-Chobas” (tents without poles), brocade and gold threaded canopies with golden poles and fine carpets. Silver bungalow (a moveable double storey building) was especially erected¹⁰⁵ and that could be sent to the place wherever the Maharaja wished to celebrate *dussehra*.

‘*Lanka*’¹⁰⁶ was erected for *dussehra* day. Usually it was constructed where the Maharaja observed the festival. We may assume that this practice of construction of *lanka* was followed at other places also. Money was given for the preparation of *lanka* and the orders were issued that it must be erected in a graceful and stylish manner with exquisite beauty.¹⁰⁷ In 1824 the Maharaja ordered to the *bhagats* of Lahore to construct *lanka* in suburbs of Wazirabad and Ramnagar. He gave rupees 14,00 for this purpose. He also gave rupees 500 to the men of Ghulam Mohammad Ghubarchi for the preparation of *lanka* near Shahdara and Prince Kharak Singh was sent to Wazirabad for the conquest of *lanka*.’¹⁰⁸

All the Chieftains, Sardars, *vakils*, *munshis* and commandants of platoons were issued firm orders to prepare yellow garments to be worn on the day of *dussehra*. They were also ordered to present horses decorated with golden saddles before the Maharaja and come prepared with their contingents for annual inspection.¹⁰⁹ In 1830, all the chieftains and Sardars enthusiastically engaged themselves in the preparation of their garments for the *dussehra* day.¹¹⁰ Celebrations of *dussehra* were begun by worshiping of horse, cannon and sword according to the advice of the Brahmins.¹¹¹ The Maharaja then visited Harmandir Sahib, took sacred bath, made prostration and offered large sums of money as *ardas* in different *bungas*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 409; Daftar III, 324; Daftar IV, 337.

¹⁰⁶ *Lanka*- an artificial fort like *lanka*, where the mock battles were fought and effigies of Rawan Kumbhkaran and Meghnath were raised.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 384, 409, 494.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 384, 339, 369, 482, 491.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 453; Daftar III, 94, 102.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 495.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 172, 309, 329, 484; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 464; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 201.

and other places. The poor and needy shared his bounty, as the Maharaja showered money with both hands.¹¹²

At about the third quarter of the day, the Maharaja and all other attendants went to the *kotha dussehrawala*, on the backs of well decorated elephants and well equipped horses with golden saddles and harnesses.¹¹³ On all the four sides, platoons, *topkhana* and troops of horsemen established themselves. The Maharaja inspected silver bungalow and took his seat in golden chair upon the second floor of silver bungalow. The princes were given seats near him.¹¹⁴

As per royal decrees all the chieftains, *daftaris* and *vakils* presented themselves, well equipped and well dressed in fine garments and presented *nazars* to the Maharaja.¹¹⁵ In 1831, for instance, Sardar Fateh Singh came first with two horses, one having a golden saddle and the other a silver one. After that Raja Dhian Singh presented himself with one horse with a golden saddle and rupees 10,000 and Jamadar Khushal Singh offered rupees 8,000 and one horse to the Maharaja. Sardar Attar Singh Majithia, Sandhanwalia Sardars and Sardar Jawala Singh Padania presented in the same way with large sums of money and one horse each. After that all the Sardars presented *nazars* one by one according to their turn. Infact, the offerings of *nazarana* by the officers became a symbol of submission to the Maharaja.¹¹⁶ Not only the Sardars and chieftains presented *nazars*, even the princes also presented *nazars* to the Maharaja. In 1838, Kanwar Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh offered Rs. 1,100 and five horses each.¹¹⁷

The Maharaja reciprocated by offerings resplendent robes of honour as *inam* to all those present according to their ranks and status.¹¹⁸ In 1828, the Maharaja fixed up installation mark of Rajaship on the forehead of Hira Singh and honoured him with

¹¹² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 410; Daftar III (IV-V) V, 54, 55, 260; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 465.

¹¹³ *Kotha dussehrawala*- various kinds of floorings and carpets spread out in the place for *dussehra* festival. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 495; Daftar III (IV-V), 55.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 409, 455.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 269, 484; Daftar III (I-III), 391, 455.

¹¹⁶ Suri, *Umdat* III (I-III) 102; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 5.

¹¹⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 261.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 484, 486; Daftar III (I-III) II, 270, 463; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 463.

the title of 'Raja' and also granted a *jagir* to him in Poonchh worth rupees 60,000.¹¹⁹ Offerings were also made to dancing girls. Bards and singers created an atmosphere resounding with mirth and merriment.¹²⁰ After the exchange of *nazars* or *imams*, the Maharaja turned his attention to the scene of the conquest of *lanka* where the effigies of Rawan, Kumbhkaran and Meghnath were set up. The Maharaja came to the scene with his triumphant troops, *zamburks* (swivels) and cavalry and ordered them to fight a mock battle for the conquest of *lanka*.¹²¹ In 1811, in the hustle and bustle of public, hands fell upon guns and swords and many people were killed, others were wounded. Diwan Hukam Singh was called from Lahore to Amritsar for the purpose of treatment and healing the wounds of the casualties.¹²² All the platoons accompanying Lord Ram Chander laid a siege around the effigies and set up cannons and swivels there. By incessant firing of cannons, conquest and victory was proclaimed. A discharge of *topkhana* took place with great glory.¹²³ In 1835, Sardar Tej Singh was given one hundred and twenty five mounds pucca gun powder for use on the *dussehra* day.¹²⁴ Later the Maharaja inspected the parade of the troops, horsemen and the platoons and felt satisfied.¹²⁵

The worship and display of arms, parade of troopers, presence of the nobles and vassals signified the supremacy of the Maharaja. It was symbolic of the Maharaja to represent himself as leader of the forces of virtue as against that of the evil. The firing of last shot on the effigy of Rawan was symbolic enough of his dominate position vis-à-vis the vassals and nobles.

The festival of *dussehra* was continued to be celebrated with great display and splendour even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A number of references are found in *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*. In 1841, Maharaja Sher Singh for instance, after worshipping the elephant, horse and sword, entered the tent without poles fixed near Mian Mir, whereupon a discharge of cannons took place in honour of his arrival there and all the glorious chieftains and responsible persons secured everlasting felicity by

¹¹⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 456; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 160.

¹²⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 455-56.

¹²¹ Suri, *Umdat* Daftar II, 309, 361-62, 373-74, 409, 484-85; Daftar III (I-III) II, 410.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 109; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 465.

¹²³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 109, 361, 362; Daftar III (I-III) II, 271.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, III (I-III) II, 325-326; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 464.

¹²⁵ Suri, *Umdat* II, 431; Daftar III (I-III) II, 271, 410; Daftar III (IV-V), 55.

submitting *nazars* to him along with horses with gold saddles in addition to gold ducats. With the destruction of *lanka* by Lord Ram Chander, the discharge of *topkhana* took place with great *éclat*. After that Campoo-i-Mualla secured the honour and pride of offering salute before Maharaja Sher Singh.¹²⁶

The festival per excellence of *kartik* is *diwali*, designated as the festival of lights. It is observed on the 15th day of the first half of month of *kartika* (October-November). *Diwali* is corrupt form of the Sanskrit word '*deepawali*' meaning row or cluster of lights and the festival is so called because of the illumination that form its main attraction.¹²⁷ The festival with its rich tradition was celebrated by both Hindus and Sikhs. For Hindus this festival commemorated the birth of Goddess Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu, harbinger of good fortune and prosperity.¹²⁸ It was also celebrated in the honour of Lord Ram Chander's return to Ayodhya after an exile of fourteen years. And illuminations of lamps on this occasion were done to celebrate Lord Rama's victory over Rawan.¹²⁹ Sikh started celebrating *diwali* from the time of sixth Guru, Hargobind, who on his release from Gwalior fort by the Mughal authorities arrived in the city of Amritsar accompanied by fifty two chieftains. The residents of the city were greatly elated and since then, the festival of *diwali* was celebrated with jubilation.¹³⁰ This festival signified the victory of justice, *dharma* and *ahinsa* over injustice, *adharma* and *hinsa*.

Diwali was celebrated with great gusto. Houses were white washed days ahead of it, new clothes were purchased and sweets of all kinds were prepared and distributed among the friends and relatives. The principal ceremonial observance on the occasion of *diwali* was the worship of the images of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Lakshmi. The theme of material wealth in the rite was publicly exhibited by worshipping a silver coin along side sacred icons. It was considered auspicious to be

¹²⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 182, 193.

¹²⁷ K.M.Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 231; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. III, 1507; P. Thomas, *Festivals and Holidays of India*, 13.

¹²⁸ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 118; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopaedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 126.

¹²⁹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, V, 465; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *The Sikh World: An Encyclopaedic Survey of Sikh Religion and Culture*, 126.

¹³⁰ Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. I, 590; Harjot Oberoi, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 185; S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of the Punjab*, 79.

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at home on *diwali* day to receive the blessings of the Goddess Lakshmi. After that illuminations took place. Fireworks were discharged. Gambling was considered auspicious on this day. People kept awake the whole night and tried their luck at dice.¹³¹ It is believed that whosoever gambled on this night would prosper throughout the ensuing year.

The peasantry was engaged in sowing *rabi* crop, which would be reaped in *kharif*, there was a long wait ahead. In anticipation of the future crop there emerged a popular prognosticatory tradition. If it rained on *diwali* the forth coming harvest would be abundant.¹³² The villagers observed *diwali* for two days. The first day was called *chotti diwali* and the second day was called *bari diwali*. On the night of *chotti diwali* ancestors were worshipped. It was believed that on this night the *pitr* or ancestors visited the house which was freshly plastered for the occasion and the family lit lamps and sit up all night to receive them.¹³³ On the day of *bari diwali* the housewives put all the sweepings and old clothes in a dust pan and emptied it out on the dunghill saying “*daladar dur ho*”.¹³⁴

Diwali was most popular festival among the commercial classes. For them the festival had much significance as it marks the beginning of the new business year. They clear and close their old accounts, books and ledgers after worshipping Goddess Lakshmi began their new accounts, books and ledgers. They generally started everything afresh on *diwali*.¹³⁵ Thus several traditions – agrarian, commercial and religious – fused to make *diwali* very popular in Punjab. During the turbulent eighteenth century it was customary for the roaming warrior bands of Sikhs to converge upon Amritsar braving all hazards to celebrate *diwali*.

Diwali was celebrated with merriments, rejoicings, music and dance in the Lahore Darbar. The preparations for *diwali* were started many days before. The royal

¹³¹ A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 118, 119; P.Thomas, *Festivals and Holidays of India*, 4.

¹³² Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 186.

¹³³ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 239; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 465.

¹³⁴ May thriftlessness and poverty be far from us. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier*, Vol. I, Punjab Languages Department, Punjab, 146; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. I, 16-17.

¹³⁵ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 239; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 118-119; P. Thomas, *Festivals and Holidays of India*, 4.

orders were issued to the *kardars* to supply the earthen lamps, oil, cotton wicks and sweetmeats. Sohan Lal Suri has noticed that in 1831, the *kardar* of Shehr-i-Nau was ordered by the Maharaja to supply one lakh earthen lamps, three maunds of oil, a large number of cotton wicks and sweetmeats.¹³⁶

On this day the Maharaja visited Harmandir Sahib. He ordered the march of his royal standards from Lahore for taking a sacred bath at Amritsar. He took bath in the holy tank and listened recitations from Granth Sahib and made an *ardas*. He offered large sums of money at Harmandir Sahib.¹³⁷ In 1833, a tent with poles of silver was offered as an *ardas* to be erected in the premises of Harmandir Sahib.¹³⁸ The Maharaja also performed *samkalap*. While performing *samkalap*, he gave away elephants, horses, cows, buffaloes, gold, silver and clothes.¹³⁹ *Tuladan* was also performed on this day. The Maharaja ordered Misr Beli Ram to present gold on this occasion for its distribution among the deserving and needy.¹⁴⁰ In 1816, a large sum of money was also distributed among the poor and the needy to nullify the evil effect of the conjunction of six planets as advised by the Brahmans.¹⁴¹

A royal Darbar was held on this day and it was attended by all courtiers who offered *nazarana* to the Maharaja by way of their allegiance and salutation.¹⁴² In return they received *khillats* and other rewards. In 1838, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered to give rupees 1,100 in cash and 15 garments in addition to 23 jewels to Raja Hira Singh for purposes of *dharmarth* on the *diwali*.¹⁴³

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was conscious enough for the smooth celebration of the festival, and therefore, he took all security measures to keep peace and order during this occasion. In 1833, he ordered Sardar Tej Singh to announce in the Campoo-i-mualla that none of the soldiers should drink on the auspicious day of *diwali*. One by

¹³⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 130-131; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 465.

¹³⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 310; Daftar III (I-III), 131.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 237.

¹³⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 131; Daftar III (IV-V) V, 274; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 408.

¹⁴⁰ Raja Dhian Singh Suggested the Maharaja to perform a *tuladan* of gold on the *diwali* day. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 327.

¹⁴¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 213.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III) II, 237.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 270.

one the companies should go, beating their drums and return after taking bath. On the way to the Harmandir Sahib, they should not cause any obstruction.¹⁴⁴

At night illuminations and display of fireworks were undertaken with great glory and the surface of the earth began to reflect the sky. In 1827, the Maharaja invited Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha and in union with each other, they rode out to enjoy the festivity, the illuminations and moved among the enthusiastic crowds of the ordinary people.¹⁴⁵ After that drinking parties were organized in which dancing girls were engaged for singing and dancing and they also received handsome rewards.¹⁴⁶

Bathing in the holy *sarovars* is considered as sacred and pious in the Punjabi society particularly by the Sikhs and the Hindus. A large number of people flock to Amritsar for *darshan ashnan* as ordained by the fourth Guru, Ram Das. *Sankranti* (*sangrand*, the first day of the month according to *bikrami* era) and *amavas* or *masya* (moonless night) are considered ritually significant. On these occasions, people visited Harmandir Sahib or other local shrines, they took sacred bath and made an *ardas*. In Sikh tradition, the devotees were expected either listen to or read the Guru Granth Sahib.¹⁴⁷ *Sangrand* and *amavas* were the days of festivities and alms giving to the poor and needy.

Following the injunction the Maharaja was particular to take bath on every *sangrand* and *amavas* in the sacred tank. He listened to Granth Sahib, made an *ardas*, performed *parkarma* and enjoyed the sight of gathering. There are several instances when he visited Harmandir Sahib on the *sangrand* and distributed alms and charities to the deserving and the poor.¹⁴⁸ In 1831, on the day of *sangrand* of *jeth* (May), the Maharaja entered the Harmandir Sahib, take seat in his *bunga* and then, embarking on a boat, reached the *dukh bhanjani pori* for taking the sacred bath. He then performed his *samkalap* with suits of clothes and other things and gave rupees 5,500 to the Akalis, rupees 800 to the *granthis* and rupees 1,100 along with a horse to the

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III), 237; H.R.Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 466.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 433.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III), 143; Daftar III (IV-V), 62; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 408.

¹⁴⁷ Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. IV, 44, 97; Harjot Oberai, *Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 188.

¹⁴⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 28, 102, 140, 178, 239, 267, 403; Daftar III (IV-V), 110, 135; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 416, 417.

Brahmans. After that he made an *ardas* of rupees 1,100 to Harmandir Sahib and listened to Granth Sahib and made an *ardas* of rupees 1,100 to Akal *bunga*, rupees 500 to Jhanda *bunga* and rupees 1,100 to his own *bunga*.¹⁴⁹ He also distributed large sums of money and other things to the poor, deserving, needy and religious persons.¹⁵⁰ In 1835, on such occasion, the Maharaja gave horses, cows, golden pitchers, suits of clothes and many other things to the deserving and the needy.¹⁵¹ On the day of every *sangrand*, *tuladan* and *samkalap* were performed.¹⁵² In 1838, on the day of *sangrand* of *magh* (January), the Maharaja performed *samkalap* and gave 31 suits of clothes and 11 gold pitchers to be utilized in gold plating of Harmandir Sahib, five for Ber Baba Sahib to be utilized by Misr Vir Bhan of Amritsar, *fakir* of Nabha, Paryog Brahmans and Tarn Taran Sahib, respectively, in addition to one elephant, several cows, rupees 7,000 and many other things distributed as usual, with a separate sum of rupees 1,000 for Akalis.¹⁵³

Similarly he visited Tarn Taran for sacred bath on the day of *amavas*.¹⁵⁴ In 1836, on the day of *amavas* of *bhadon* (August), the Maharaja performed a *parkarma*, made an *ardas* of rupees 500 and reaching the *baradari*, performed a *samkalap* with one elephant, one horse, several cows, several suits of clothes and large sums in cash and returned gloriously to put up in *dukh nawaran* and granted rupees 1,100 to Lala Fateh Chand for the construction of the floor for *parkarma*.¹⁵⁵ On *amavas* a large sums of money was sent by way of offerings towards the *gurdawars*, especially those of Amritsar, Dera Baba Nanak, *baoli* of Goindwal, Khadur Sahib, Thamb Sahib, Tarn Taran and others by the Maharaja. He also bestowed horses, elephants, cows and clothes on the Brahmans and other deserving persons on this day.¹⁵⁶

The festivals of Muslims were also observed with ceremonious display during our period. *Muharram*, *id-ul-fitr*, *id-ul-zuha* and *shab-i-barat* were celebrated with

¹⁴⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 40-41.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 169, 192, 248, 376, 474, 477, 491; Daftar III (I-III), 96, 97, 160, 198, 315, 324, 369, 378.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III), 324.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, Daftar III (I-III), 90, 92, 148, 159, 234, 331, 337, 342, 414, 361, 418.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Daftar III (IV-V), 80.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Daftar II, 147, 201, 230, 261, 329, 347, 360, 384, 396, 429, 452, 482; Daftar III (I-III) II, 195, 274, 332; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh Maharaja of the Punjab 1780-1839*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, 50.

¹⁵⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) III, 402.

¹⁵⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 20.

great enthusiasm by the Muslims. The Muslim festivals had no correspondence to any particular date or month of the Gregorian calendar as they were based on the *hijra* which followed pure lunar reckoning. Among these festivals, *muharram*, the Muslim month of mourning is celebrated as the anniversary of Imam Husain whose death at Karbala is one of the most tragic events in the history of Islam. The first ten days of this month were observed as the days of lamentation by Muslims in general and Shias in particular.¹⁵⁷ The Shias made *tazias* or effigies to commemorate the massacre of Husain and Hasan, descendants of the Prophet. *Tazias* were beautifully decorated and made the rounds of the streets. The Muslims kept fast during the first nine days of the month eating only pulse and recited the story of Hasan and Husain from a raised platform. On the tenth day, they would erect funeral pyres which were burnt one after another. It was often the occasion of conflict and confrontation between Shias and Sunnis.¹⁵⁸ In 1825, Maharaja Ranjit Singh issued an order that there must not be any *tazia* on the streets in connection with the *muharram* festival. Mirza Bagum Beg, *kumidan-i-topkhana*, with others, approached the Maharaja and protested to him on behalf of his Muslim officers. He pleaded in favour of the Muslims that they were taking out *tazia* from time immemorial. The Maharaja told them to build *tazias* in their own houses but not to exhibit them in public. But the Muslims of Lahore and Muslim soldiers of the Maharaja were very dissatisfied with this decision. The Maharaja then gave orders to the *kotwal* to proclaim that anyone willing to take out *tazia* could do so and the Maharaja would not object.¹⁵⁹ Aflaton, *kotwal* of Lahore was ordered to take necessary steps to avert any breach of peace between Hindus and Muslims on the one hand and between Sunnis and Shias on the other hand.¹⁶⁰

The night of the Prophet's ascent to heaven is celebrated as *shab-i-barat* or 'Night of Record' on the 14th of *shabban*. The general belief is that on this night, the lives and fortunes of the mortals for the coming year are registered in heaven. Muslims prepared stew, curds, sweetmeats, etc. in the name of their deceased

¹⁵⁷ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 242; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Great Mughals*, 93.

¹⁵⁸ The chief difference in the observance of the *muharram* is that the Shias celebrated it with mourning, where as the Sunnis do not. Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. II, 9.

¹⁵⁹ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A Mukerjee and Co., Calcutta, 1968, 150.

¹⁶⁰ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 468.

ancestors.¹⁶¹ Sweets and presents were exchanged. They illuminated their houses and also displayed fireworks. They spent their day in making merry. Some religious enthusiastic Muslims spent the whole night in offering special prayers and reading the holy Quran.¹⁶²

To celebrate the day of *shab-i-barat* in 1823, the Maharaja ordered the discharge of *topkhana*. He also allowed illuminations through out the night in the Lahore and the fort and celebrate this occasion with great glory.¹⁶³

Id-ul-Fitr or feast of breaking the fast, also known as *id-ul-saghir*, begins on the first day of *shawal* and continued for two days. On the day of *id*, the Muslims performed ablutions, put on white dress and distributed alms. Prayers were offered at the mosques in the morning. Friends and relatives exchanged dainty dishes and wished each other good luck. Then followed enjoyments including display of fireworks.¹⁶⁴ During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a large fair was held at the tomb of Shah Abdul Muali outside the Mochi gate at Lahore.¹⁶⁵

Id-ul-Zuha or feast of daylight, *bakr id* or goat festival, is the feast of sacrifice held on the day or the evening of the 10th *dhul hijjah* in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ismail. This festival is significant with the sacrifice of the goat or *bakr*. A cow, a sheep, a goat or a camel was sacrificed by the Muslims, who ate some and gave away the rest as gift to friends and relatives and in alms.¹⁶⁶ The people assembled in large numbers in *idgahs*. The fair of *id-ul-zuha* was held at the tomb of Shah Adbul Muali at the Mochi gate of the city of Lahore.¹⁶⁷ In January 1811, on the day of *id-ul-zuha*, *qazi* Faqirullah proclaimed by drums all over the town (Lahore) that all Muslims must go to the royal mosque to offer their *id* prayers. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted the *qazi* one fine woollen shawl. He ordered Mushtaq

¹⁶¹ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the people of Hindustan*, 241; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. II, 10.

¹⁶² K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 241; P.N. Chopra, *Society and Culture During Mughal Age*, 94.

¹⁶³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 369.

¹⁶⁴ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under the Later Mughals*, 279; Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. II, 10; C.H. Buck, *Faith, Fairs and Festivals of India*, 201.

¹⁶⁵ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 61.

¹⁶⁶ Usha Sharma (ed.), *Festivals in Indian Society*, Vol. II, 11; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 276.

¹⁶⁷ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 61; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 279.

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Rae, the accountant, to post men in every street and bylane of the city of Lahore to watch that everybody behaved properly and in case of any disturbance he should be informed at once.¹⁶⁸

Besides the above mentioned festivals, a number of major and minor fairs were celebrated in Punjab. A significantly large proportion of fairs were held in the rural areas. It alluded towards greater participation and involvement of the rural people in these fairs. Each fair had its own particularity in terms of its origin, the related myth and associated rituals. Hence these may be classified accordingly on the basis of their cultural themes. The majority of fairs can be summed up under two categories: calendrical and sacred. The fairs associated with calendrical festivals were the *diwali* fair at Amritsar, *hola mohalla* at Anandpur Sahib and *basant* at mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain at Lahore. In the latter category were local fairs related to historical events and personalities, for instance a *pir* or Sikh Gurus and the commemoration of events associated with the life of a holy person and the fairs held in honour of various Gods and Goddesses.¹⁶⁹

The people were deeply involved in the worship of miracle saints and village deities and undertook regular pilgrimages to their shrines. Among these saints *sakhi sarvar* who flourished some time in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was widely worshipped by the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims while he was specially favoured by the Jats of central Punjab.¹⁷⁰ He was more popular among the barren women because he cured them of their curse. Almost every village in Punjab had a shrine dedicated to his eminence called *sultan ka than*. A number of fairs were held in his honour which included the annual fair at Dhonkal in the Gujranwala district, the *jhanda fair* at Peshawar and *kadmon ka mela* at Anarkali in Lahore.¹⁷¹ A place near the Lahori gate in Lahore was a popular resort of the people who wanted to give offerings in the name

¹⁶⁸ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 426.

¹⁶⁹ Harjot Oberai, *Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 188; D.L. Dewan, "Sakhi Sarwar- A Popular Deity in the Jullundur Doab", *Punjab History Conference*, Patiala, 1971, 107.

¹⁷⁰ Harjot Oberai, *Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 188.

¹⁷¹ *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84*, 20; Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 153.

of *sakhi sarvar*.¹⁷² The *kadmon ka mela* was held at the shrine of *sakhi sarvar* at Lahore in the month of February on the first Monday after the new moon. Offerings were made at the tomb and a certain class of musician called *dholis* sang and danced at the shrine.¹⁷³

Another popular deity among the rural people was *gugga*, whose primary power lay in overpowering snakes or curing his worshippers from snake and scorpion bites. But through his supernatural powers he could also grant wishes, heal the ill, protect cattle and, like other saints bestow a son. Annually, in the months of August and September for a period of nine days, *gugga* was worshipped in the form of snake.¹⁷⁴

An integral part of sacred practices in nineteenth century Punjab was the worship of the Goddess, a powerful, creative, active, transcendent female being. In Punjab, *sitala devi* or the cool one, the goddess of pustule diseases was widely worshipped during the months of April and May, possibly because the smallpox epidemic often erupted during the dry heat of the summer months. The shrine of *sitala*, often called *than*, which was found almost in every town and village, was frequented only by women and children, as men were not supposed to set foot within them. In Lahore *sitala* temple was situated between Lahore gate and Shah Almi gate. A fair was held in *sawan* (July-August) in honour of *sitala*. The Goddess was worshipped and offerings were made.¹⁷⁵

Another Goddess, *bhadar kali* who supposed to be potent for good or evil was popularly worshipped. Her temple was at Niazbeg near Lahore and a fair was held in her honour in the middle of June. Persons of all classes gathered from Lahore city but

¹⁷² J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 25.

¹⁷³ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-84*, 61; H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces*, Vol. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces*, Vol. I, 570; S.S. Bedi, *Punjabi Lokdhara Vishavkosh*, Vol. II, 428.

¹⁷⁴ Harjot Oberai, *The Reconstruction of Religious Boundaries*, 160; Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste, and Religious Identities, Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, 181-182.

¹⁷⁵ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 462.

the people from the villages who participated in the fair were mainly the Sikhs from Amritsar and Lahore.¹⁷⁶

Numerous fairs were held in the memory of religious saints, *pirs* and the place associated with them. We do not get the information why these celebrations were done. But there were number of local fairs which were celebrated by the people for instance, *mela-i-chharian* or the fair of unmarried men was very famous in Lahore. It was held in the name of Shah Madar near the Taksali gate.¹⁷⁷ *Chiraghon ka mela* or fair of lamps was held at the Shalamar gardens on the last Saturday and Sunday in March. Originally it was a religious pilgrimage of the mausoleum of Madho Lal Husain at Baghbanpura but as the fair became more popular, it was shifted to the gardens. People belonging to different classes attended the fair. A horse fair was held during the three days preceding the fair.¹⁷⁸ Nankana fair was held at the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev, founder of Sikh religion. It was attended by the Sikhs and the Hindus in a large number.¹⁷⁹ Adjoining Begumpura was the place of *hzrat-i-ishan*. A large fair was held and the place was lighted with lamps.¹⁸⁰ After the new moon, a fair was held at the place associated with *bhairo* at Ichhra near Lahore. It was held for few nights.¹⁸¹ A fair was held in the month of *bhadon* (August-September) at the place of fourth Guru of Sikhs, Ram Das near the place of Mian Mir. There was a huge tree and a small well which were regarded as sacred. The place is believed to be very auspicious.¹⁸² A *bhagat* named Chajju, possessed the powers of miracle. His place, referred to as *chaubara-i-chajju bhagat*, was an edifying place of pilgrimage. Men and women visited this place in a large number.

A large cattle fair was held at the tomb of Gulu Shah at Pasrur on the 7th of *asu* (September-October). Thousands of cattle were brought here for sale.¹⁸³ At

¹⁷⁶ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 63; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 121; O.P. Ralhan, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, 663.

¹⁷⁷ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 121; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 190.

¹⁷⁸ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 61.

¹⁷⁹ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 121.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁸² H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 422; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 25, 120.

¹⁸³ *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-1884*, 37; S.S. Bedi, *Punjabi Lokdhara Visavkosh*, Vol. V, 1262.

Dhounkal, near Sohdera, the tomb of *lakdata* was the scene of a great gathering of Muhammadans, called *kadam*, which lasted for one month.¹⁸⁴

The *khangah* of a Muhammadan saint Bari Latif Shah in Rawalpindi was visited by large crowd during the fair season which lasted for a month beginning from 12th May every year.¹⁸⁵ At the shrine of Shah Charagh, in Rawalpindi, a fair was held once a week, on Thursday. Once a year, on June 3rd, a special fair in honour of the *pir* took place.¹⁸⁶

In Gujrat, near Kot Mir Husain and Chaudhowal, was the *khangah* of the venerable Hafiz Hayat, the gnostic, who lived during the reign of Ahmad Shah and died in A.H. 1185. To this day, the *darvesh* and his disciples themselves cultivated the land and provided the travellers with meals all the time. Once a year, a large fair was held at this place on the 19th of the month of *muharram*.¹⁸⁷ A large fair was held at the tomb of Shah Daulah. His tomb is laid on the east of the Gujrat, in the suburb called *garhi Shah Daulah*. He was looked upon as the ‘guardian of Gujrat’ and famous for his miracles. But the so called miracle of the “*chuhas*” or mice was the one which was most associated with his memory. The *chuhas* were microcephalous subjects with large pointed ears, a conical head and rat like expression of face. They were devoid of understanding or power of speech and were used for begging only. The fair of Shah Daulah was held on the first Thursday of March.¹⁸⁸

In addition to these festivals and fairs there were number of other sources for recreation of the people such as games, sports and professional entertainers. The Punjabis are well known for their interests in martial arts, it may be hunting and other rural sports. Hunting was the most important and favourite means of recreation and

¹⁸⁴ *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-1884*, 37.

¹⁸⁵ *Gazetteer of Rawalpindi District, 1883-1884*, 54; O.P. Ralhan, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, 665.

¹⁸⁶ *Gazetteer of Rawalpindi District, 1883-1884*, 54; O.P. Ralhan, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, 665.

¹⁸⁷ *Gazetteer of Gujrat District, 1883-1884*, 38; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, 67.

¹⁸⁸ *Gazetteer of Gujrat District, 1883-1884*, 38-39; A.C. Elliott, *The Chronicles of Gujrat*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), 53-61; Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste, and Religious Identities, Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab*, 178.

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was indulged in by the kings, nobles and commoners. Costly and dangerous expeditions were organized for hunting.¹⁸⁹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh was extremely fond of hunting. Hunting tours were often conducted by the Maharaja, accompanied by his courtiers and officials. Prizes were also awarded to those who had exhibited gallantry in killing wild animals.¹⁹⁰

Certain parts of forests were reserved as hunting preserves called by different names as *bela*, *bir*, *rakh* or *rumna*. Cultivation or grazing of cattle, or cutting of wood and grass was not allowed in these areas. The most noteworthy hunting grounds were near Shah Balawal at Lahore, Kahnuwan in Gurdaspur district, Mahadevi and Ahu or Haran Manara near Shaikhupura. The bushy jungles, along the Ravi and the Indus river abounded in wild boars, leopards, deers and other wild animals.¹⁹¹

Hunting was common. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's hunting parties were well organized in royal style. He used to ride on an elephant followed by magnificently dressed horsemen and soldiers who regular beating drums to start the game. Sometimes, he carried thousands of men for hunting the tiger. He shot the tiger from an elephant, or else attacks them on horseback with a sword.¹⁹² Alexander Burnes described the hunting of a tiger by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1831 as follows:

*"The party was entirely composed of horsemen. The monster was speedily wounded by someone, and several riders were unhorsed from the fright of their steeds. The Sikhs then advanced on foot, sword in hand, to attack the tiger; he sprang at one man most furiously, and as he fired on his left shoulder, the poor fellow bravely struck his head by a well directed blow; the contest was unequal, and the man fell, horribly lacerated. His comrades instantly ran up, and with cuts and wounds, the tiger soon fell".*¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Later Mughals*, 63, 64.

¹⁹⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 603; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, V.V.R.I. Hoshiarpur, 1960, 219-21.

¹⁹¹ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 584.

¹⁹² H.L.O., *Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 51; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 196.

¹⁹³ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea of Lahore*, Vol. 1, 23-25; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 584-85.

Besides hunting the tigers and lions, elephants, leopards, deers, buffaloes, ducks and hogs were also hunted. The hunting of the wild hogs was a favourite amusement with the Sikhs. They did not use the spear but kill the animal either with the sword or the matchlock. Osborne wrote that the Sikhs had a curious way of catching the wild hogs. They made a kind of snare of strong withys and setting them in runs of the hogs, generally succeed in catching the finest boars, who, once disturbed rush blindly on, till brought up, and generally at a single blow of the sword put an end to them.¹⁹⁴ In 1832, Mohan Lal went out for hunting with the Maharaja at Lahore. The Maharaja was on horseback, gorgeously apparelled. In half an hour a number of hogs were killed, and many more entrapped alive by the Sikh soldiers. Maharaja Ranjit Singh seeing the slain hogs and rewarded the sportsmen.¹⁹⁵ In 1838, Osborne and his companions enjoyed two hours hunting in the *rumna* fields. During hunting they found a considerable quantity of wild hogs and few black partridges. On their return Maharaja Ranjit Singh critically examined every pig. He counted the number of balls each had received and when he found one killed by a single shot, asked, “that was a good shot”, and one who had got several bullets was declared “bad very bad”. He gave each of the servants ten rupees.¹⁹⁶

The small games were taken with matchlocks, dogs and hawks. For big games the whole camp moved up with the Maharaja. On such occasions the number of elephants would be as large as five hundred with rich harness and brocade trappings, followed by a crowd of superb horses and a crowd of pedestrians with hawks on their wrists.¹⁹⁷ Like the nobility, the commoners also had great interest in hunting. Young men sometimes went out in groups at night for hunting.¹⁹⁸

Animal fighting was everywhere popular. The people had to content themselves with the less expensive fighting of goats, rams, cocks, stages, antelopes,

¹⁹⁴ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, With an Introduction sketch of the Origin and Rise of Sikh State*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 183.

¹⁹⁵ Mohal Lal, *Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Heart and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1971, 10.

¹⁹⁶ W.G. Osborne, *Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 67-68.

¹⁹⁷ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 585; P.N. Khera, *Social Life in Sikh Kingdom*, Punjab Past and Present (ed.) Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979, 46, 47.

¹⁹⁸ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1962, 71.

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dogs and bulls.¹⁹⁹ The kings and the nobles amused themselves with costly and dangerous combats between elephants, tigers, lions, bears, leopards, bulls and other wild beats. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was fond of ram fighting. He had many rams for this purpose.²⁰⁰

Wrestling, *kushti* or *dangal* was one of the most favourite amusements throughout the Punjab. It was a favourite form of diversion. It was considered to be not merely pastime, but a real necessity for daily exercise and healthy life.²⁰¹ Wrestling or *kushti* was pursued by the kings, nobles and commoners alike. Many wrestling matches were held under the royal patronage and the monarch and princes took delight in seeing them and heartening the contestants by their presence. The winners were profusely rewarded. There was a certain set of rules to be observed by the participants and those who broke them were not only debarred from future matches but also sometime, given exemplary punishments.²⁰² Poet Nihal Singh tells about the patronage of wrestlers by the Sikh monarchs at Lahore.²⁰³

Gambling was an old and respected tradition of the ancient *kshatriyas* who resorted to it on certain festivals with some sort of religious sanction.²⁰⁴ It was very popular among the kings and nobles as well as among the commoners. Gambling of anykind, sometimes with cards, dice and *kauris*, sometimes in bets and in many other forms was popular among the upper classes.²⁰⁵

Chess or *shatranj* was a game played on a board, which was divided into 64 squares, eight on each of the four side. The game could be played both two handed and four handed.²⁰⁶ Poet Nazabat appears to have been familiar with *shatranj* or chess. As he says, all the great men were fond of amusing themselves with chess

¹⁹⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, 71; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 329.

²⁰⁰ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 591.

²⁰¹ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 56; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Great Mughals*, 272.

²⁰² K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 223; M.A. Ansari, *Social Life of Mughals Emperors 1526-1706*, Shanti Publication, Allahabad, 1974, 172.

²⁰³ Nihal Singh, *Baintan Sher Singh Kian*, (ed.) Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, 154.

²⁰⁴ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 236-267.

²⁰⁵ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 49; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 118-119; P. Thomas, *Festivals and Holiday of India*, 4.

²⁰⁶ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 57.

playing by which they learnt how to govern, place and displace, give and take, with discretion and to gain their projects.²⁰⁷

The game of *chaupar* was of Indian origin coming down to us from the ancient times. It was very common among the people of those days. It is played even nowadays under different names, *chausar*, *pachisi* or the more modern *ludo*. It was a game analogous to the game of dice. It was played by four members. As indicated by Bulleh Shah, this game was popular with the gamblers.²⁰⁸

Kite flying or *patang bazi* was common amusement and marvelous skill was displayed in maneuvering the kites. The kite flying season commenced on the day of the Spring festival, *basant*, when the sky would be covered with thousands of yellow kites of all shapes and sizes. Two boys flew kites against one another. The one, whose kites flew highest, had the first try at the other's string which he tried to cut by bringing his string against it with a very sudden and rapid swoop of the kite. If he failed, his adversary had a shot at him and so on.²⁰⁹

Tent- pegging (*nezabazi*), fencing (*gataka*), sword exercise (*talwarbazi*) and horsemanship (*ghurswari*) were the games arranged on special occasions by the royal patrons of the horse-riders and the soldiers. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a great sportsman and perfect swordman.²¹⁰ But it does not mean that officers and Sardars were the silent spectators of sports and games. They themselves were good sportsmen who at times displayed their skill before the Maharaja and the honoured guests too. Raja Dhian Singh was a good sportsman, displayed his skill in horsemanship, shooting and sword exercise.²¹¹ In 1831, at Ropar, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Suchet Singh, Gulab Singh, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, General Ilahi Bakhsh, General Ventura and Allard displayed their great skill and activity in the military feats. Last of all came the Maharaja himself, on horseback. A brass vessel was laid on the maidan, and three

²⁰⁷ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.d Thesis, 329; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 233.

²⁰⁸ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.d Thesis, 329.

²⁰⁹ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 60; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 191; B.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 67.

²¹⁰ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.d Thesis, 332; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 584.

²¹¹ S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 454.

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times did the Maharaja lift it with the tip of his drawn sword, the horse going at his speed. He also joined the feast of horsemanship and displayed his talent.²¹²

Pigeon flying, *ishqbazi* or love play was another means of entertainment for both the lower as well as higher strata. It required a lot of patience to rear and train the birds. The orthodox Muslims did not object to pigeon flying so strongly as to the 'accused' cock fighting. Nobles too enjoyed this game.²¹³

Besides these means of recreations and amusements, the children had their own games, by which they entertained themselves. their games were countless, the best known among the boys were *gulli danda* resembled to tip cat, *kabaddi*,²¹⁴ closely resembled to prisoner's base, *khiddo khundi* much same as hockey²¹⁵ and *lukan michi* or hide and seek. *kili thipa* was played with flat circular disks about two and half inches in diameter and a quarter of an inch thick which was aimed at the brick. *Gedian* was played with small pieces of wood. *karanga* or *jang plang* was played on tress. *Thappa* was game somewhat resembling to fox and goose game.²¹⁶ *Laatu* or tops made of clay was spun, was the famous game among the boys.²¹⁷

The games popular among the girls have a family resemblance to those known in the society. Girls played with dolls (*gudian patola*) the game generally taking the form of marriage between male and female dolls (*guda* and *gudi*). All the marriage ceremonies were performed. Another favourite game with dolls was *dedo* or lamentation for the death of a doll. *Gitas* (small pebbles) and *shah-shatapu* (hop scotch) were also common among the girls.²¹⁸

²¹² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 127.

²¹³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 191; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 236.

²¹⁴ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 49; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 274.

²¹⁵ Bulleh Shah, *Qafian* (ed. Bikram Singh Ghuman), Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 2002, 33; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under Later Mughals*, 274.

²¹⁶ B.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 67-70; O.P. Ralhan *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, 660.

²¹⁷ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 17; B.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 70.

²¹⁸ B.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 70; B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under the Later Mughals*, 271, 273, 274.

Above all these recreations, there were professional entertainers like the traditional genealogists, bards or folk-singers who amused the people. The *bhats* were genealogists who recited history of the ancestors of their patrons on festive occasions. *Dums* and *mirasis* generally performed these functions for Muslims. They possessed an admirable fund of ready wit, jokes and anecdotes to amuse their clients. They were also skilled singers and musicians.²¹⁹ *Dhadis* also belonged to this category. They sang ballads in festive gatherings.²²⁰ They were also a source of passing the cultural heritage to the next generation.

Another category of professional entertainers consisted of vagrants. There were actors, buffoons (*bhands* or *naqlias*) and dancing girls (*kanjaris* or *natchanwali*). Music and dance was very popular mean of entertainment among the rulers as well as commoners.²²¹ Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very fond of music and dancing. He had a large number of dancing girls for his own entertainment as well as for his guests. He had the 'rarest beauties' in his court.²²² Apart from them there were *qalanders* (who conducted monkey and bear dances), *saperas* (snake *charmers*),²²³ *natts* and *bazigars* who performed acrobatics. Bulle Shah refers to *bazigars* as follow:

“*bazigar kya baazi khedi,*
manu putli vaang nachaya”.²²⁴

(*Bazigars* play game, and make me dance like puppet).

In retrospect, we may say that in the early nineteenth century, the people of the Punjab attached great significance to the celebrations of religious and cultural events throughout the year. These added jests to their life and brought about closer ties in

²¹⁹ *Hir Damodar*, Language Department, Patiala, 1974, 127; Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 522; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, B.R. Publishing Co. Delhi, 1974, 231, 234.

²²⁰ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris Shah* (ed. J.S. Sital), Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1963, 62.

²²¹ Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 146; *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 49; Denzil Ibbetson *Punjab Castes*, 237.

²²² Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, 310; Victor Jacquemont, *Letters From India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere During the Years, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831 Under the Order of the French Government*, Edward Churton, London, 1834, Vol. I, 391.

²²³ H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 522; Lakh Shah, *Qissa Sassi Punnu*, 16.

²²⁴ Bulleh Shah, *Qafian* (ed. B.S. Ghuman) 71; G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, 72; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 285.

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social relations. The celebration of *lohari*, *basant*, *holi*, *dussehra*, *diwali*, *id-ul-fitr* and *shab-i-barat* on a large scale characterized the vibrancy of the society. The participation of the Maharaja and his Darbar in these festivals made them even more significant. The observance of *dussehra* was the most grand of all occasions. It was used as an occasion for the Maharaja to display his power to vassals and other nobles to win their loyalty. The celebration of *basant* at the *mazar* of Madho Lal Hussain by the Maharaja and his visit to Katas Raj and to the *samadhi* of Haqiqat Rai signified his magnanimous approach towards the events of cultural importance and his profound reverence for all that was holy and spiritual irrespective of what religion it pertained to. There were numerous other fairs and festivals which were observed to commemorate the local martyrs and to pay reverence to local or some deities and Sufi saints. People of all communities participated in these. Besides having social, cultural and religious relevance, these were important from economic point of view. These were the occasions for traders, peddlers and artisans to sell their goods and artifacts. In this sense, the means of recreation, celebration of festivals, holding of fairs, games and sports signify the vibrancy of the society of Punjab during the early nineteenth century.

CHAPTER - VI

CUSTOMS, RITES AND CEREMONIES

To live in society, every human being follows customs, rites, rituals and ceremonies. These are formal, ceremonial act or procedure prescribed in religious or other solemn use which has the force of law. The term custom has been used to refer to the whole body of those shared behaviour patterns in a particular group or society that are regarded as the traditional and established ways of the people. Customs are more than mere aggregate of individual habits, a custom is a way tacitly supported by social approval. In other words, the actual enduring regularities in social behaviour accepted by and approved by most members of a group or society, may be called customs.¹ Customs influence the way people dress, eat and in general behave, they may take on the force of moral on statute laws.² However the term rites are used for a social custom or ceremony generally associated with passage from one important stage to another in someone's life like birth, initiations, marriage and death.³ To comprehend the society at a particular point of time it is always essential to know its customs, rites and ceremonies since these plays an important role in the lives of the people. These are the core features of a society. Society even judged the respectability of a person by the account of care and attention he gives to fulfillment of these social and religious norms. These may vary on the basis of caste, community, region and religion.

The most conspicuous events of domestic life are naturally the various stages of growth in the life of a person, namely birth, nuptial and death. A number of customs are associated and elaborated around these occasions. Birth is significant occasion for the family. From the day of marriage cohabitation, the wives are expected to bear children. A childless person is looked upon as having no social status. Everyone loved to have sons and considered it as a misfortune to have daughters.

¹ David L. Sills, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Co. and Free Press, 1968, Vol. II, 204-205.

² *Ibid*; *The Encyclopedia of American Education*, American Co., New York, 1972, 356-357.

³ J.S. Grewal, *A Study of Guru Granth Sahib: Doctrine, Social Content History, Structure and Status*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, 247.

The birth of a son is essential to perpetuate the family. Because according to Hindu religion only the male issue is competent to perform funeral rites and without which no ordinary soul can hope to go to heaven. The Sanskrit word *putra* also meaning “he who delivers one, from hell”.⁴ With the religious incentive for begetting sons, there is a material disadvantage in having daughters because one is expected to provide a dowry for one’s daughters usually more than, what one can afford, so as to get them respectably married into a family of social standing.⁵ Like other patrimonial societies, the birth of a daughter was considered as inauspicious and went without any celebration in Punjabi society also. The birth of a male child was seen as a blessing and celebrated with great rejoicings. Number of ceremonies were associated with his birth in the family. According to Sikh *rahat* when a Sikh woman became pregnant, she was expected to recite *japji sahib* and administered *khande da pahul*. A sword, bow and five arrows were placed in a niche in the wall or in some elevated place.⁶ Among the Hindus, ceremonies started even before the birth of a child. When the mother is expecting, she was served gifts (*reetain*) amid rejoicing among relations and neighbours.⁷ Usually delivery was effected on the ground, the mother being made to lie on a quilt with her head to the north and her feet to the south. Among the Muslims her body direction was made to face Macca and if she died during child-birth she expires in the posture in which Muslims were buried.⁸ The birth of the child was announced by *dai* (midwife) to the members of the family. To prevent mischief to the mother or the child, a number of precautions were taken an iron bangle, fire pot, water and grain were placed near the cot of the mother. The senior most members in the family, usually the father-in-law or the father, consult the priest if the time of the birth is auspicious. As soon as when a son was born in *amritdhari* Sikh family, his forehead was touched on the floor in front of sword (Sri Sahib), weapons and Guru Granth Shaib.⁹ Shortly after the birth, the new born was made to taste his first liquid food (*gurhati*) which was generally

⁴ P. Thomas, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons, Bombay, 75.
⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶ In the presence of these weapons, she is in presence of Supreme Lord. W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, 28.

⁷ Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, 172.

⁸ H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces*, Vol. I, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 763.

⁹ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 29.

administered by some elder member of the family. *Amritdari* Sikhs before giving *gurhati*, touched it with two-edged sword.¹⁰ *Chuchi dhuai* (washing of nipple) ceremony is generally performed by the unmarried sister-in-law of the mother. She washed her nipples with warm water and received some gifts and the kinswomen present on the spot, sung ceremonial songs. The breast feeding started only after this ceremony.¹¹ *Panjiri* made of wheat flour, ghee, sugar and dry fruits were given to the mother on the tenth day and in case the child is a boy, it is distributed among the brotherhood.

After childbirth, a woman was considered impure and remains confined to the house for first ten days or more as the period is called *sutak*. The period of confinement lasted for forty days and the mother would neither use henna, nor wore new clothes. Its duration was, in theory, ten days among Brahmans, twelve among Khatris, fifteen among Vaisyas and thirty among Sudra, thus varying inversely with the purity of the caste. But in practice it was eleven days among Brahmans and thirteen days among Khatris or only eleven or thirteen days for all castes.¹² On the thirteenth day the females of the household started the rites of purification by smearing the walls and the floors of house with the mixture of mud and cowdung. After the purification the mother bathed and allowed to come out with baby. *Nain* or barber's wife sprinkled the mustard oil on the threshold. Women from the families of the relatives and friends came to offer congratulations and gave money to child in the form of *shagan* (gift).

Among the Hindus and Sikhs, Brahman or *pandit* was called to record the hour and other details about the child with a view to cast a horoscope (*janampatri*). In case, the Brahman forgot to record the precise moment of birth, he carefully, scrutinized the body marks of the child to infer the particular stellar conjunction

¹⁰ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 29.

¹¹ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, Harman Publication, New Delhi, 1983, 30; Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.) Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1946, 15; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1976, 173.

¹² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 31; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopadia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. I, Viva Books, New Delhi, 2008, 578.

(*lagan*) under which the child was born.¹³ The Muslims called a *mulla* who whispered the call *subah ki azan* in the right ear of the infant and the *takbir* in its left.¹⁴ As a mark of festivity, Hindus and Sikhs usually hung a cord made of grass (*durba*) interwoven with mango leaves over the main door of the house.¹⁵

Upon learning a son's birth, numerous categories of well wishers, family priests, menials (*lagis*), bards (*dums* or *bhats*), buffoons, dancers and beggars would come to the house with their congratulations.¹⁶ All rich and poor celebrated this occasion accordingly to their status. Maharaja Ranjit Singh for example ordered to distribute large sums of money among the poor and the orphans, on the birth of Kanwar Kharak Singh.¹⁷ Similarly in 1821, on the birth of his grandson, Nau Nihal Singh, the Maharaja ordered to *mian* Dhian Chand, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sukh Dyal to distribute gold coins in the town.¹⁸

The ceremony of *chhathi* or the sixth day was performed by both Hindus and Sikhs. In Amritsar, Brahmans or Khatris did not perform this ceremony but only Arora caste observed it.¹⁹ The *chhathi* in spite of its name was not necessarily held on the sixth day of the birth.²⁰ This ceremony was also known as *dhaman*.²¹ The *purohit* conducted this ceremony. Various dishes and foods were prepared which were, however, distributed among the kinsmen and poor.²² In Sialkot, *dhaman* was also observed by the Muslims and sweetmeat (*halwa*) and cakes (*chapptis*) were

¹³ Kavi Gwal, *Vijay Vinod*, Shamsher Singh (ed.), Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1971, 139; M.A. Ansari, *Social Life Under the Mughal Emperors 1526-1706*, Shanti Publication, Allahabad, 1974, 177.

¹⁴ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 45.

¹⁵ Kavi Gwal, *Vijay Vinod*, Shamsher Singh (ed.), 140.

¹⁶ *Shadi sun ke sab chale aaye, khair kharayat wale, aashirwad aa Brahman karde den vadaiyan wale, bhatta duma naia nu zer bhakshe lal dushale*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 15.

¹⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, (tr. Amarwant Singh and ed. J.S Grewal and Indu Banga), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 337 ; Prem Singh Hoti, *Sher-i-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Pbi), Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1918, 72.

¹⁸ Diwan Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Kirpal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, 15; Fakir Syad Weheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Lion Art Press, Karachi, 1965, 149; Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 356.

¹⁹ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 27.

²⁰ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 174.

²¹ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 27.

²² *Panj dhihare jab gujre, dhaman shuru karaya, mohan bhog te luchi kachori, ander sehar vandayia*. The ceremony of *dhaman* was held on fifth day and various types of sweetmeats were distributed in the city. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 16.

distributed among the brotherhood.²³ In Lahore, among the Muslims mother and child were bathed on the first Thursday or Sunday and this was called *chathi ka gusal* and food called *sutak ka khana* was sent to all the women of the family.²⁴ The religious observance of the *aqiqa* among the Muslims was closely associated with the *chhathi* of the Hindus. The *aqiqa* was an orthodox Mohammedan rite consisting in shaving the child's head for the first time, on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-eighth or thirty-fifth day after the birth, and sacrificed two goats or sheep for a boy and one for a girl.²⁵ Among the Hindus and the Sikhs, it was customary, after bathing the child, to put on a old shirt of another child made of any article.²⁶

In Punjab, the first confinement ordinarily took place at paternal home of the mother and in this case the mother, if the child was a boy, brought some gold and silver ornaments and clothes for her in-laws. These gifts were called *chhuchhak*. The *chhuchhak* was also observed on the *chhathi* but sometimes it was postponed for some days.²⁷

Among the Hindus, *taragi* was also worn by a male child round his waist. It was made of thread, stones and beads. If parents were wealthy beads of silver were also strung. *Taragi* was worn as a preliminary to the wearing of sacred thread (*janeu*).²⁸ The naming ceremony of the child was usually performed on the tenth to twelfth day. The Hindus called a learned Brahman or *pandit* who suggests a few alphabets with reference to the infant's time of birth and one of these was chosen by the parents.²⁹ The Sikhs consulted Guru Granth Sahib for this purpose. The *granthi* or priest opened Guru Granth Sahib randomly and the first letter of the first passage

²³ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 57.

²⁴ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 57.

²⁵ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 174; M.A. Ansari, *Social Life Under the Mughal Emperors*, 177.

²⁶ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 30-31; Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 174.

²⁷ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 52.

²⁸ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 16; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 33.

²⁹ *Kahu ji sadhe Pandat, jyotic dekh Haqiqat nau dharya*. *Pandit* was called and on the basis of astrological ground *Haqiqat* name was selected. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 16; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 103; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District, 1883-1884*, 27.

on the left page is taken as the first letter of the child's name.³⁰ Among the Muslims naming ceremony was called *fal-quran*, which was usually performed on the day of infant's birth. They consulted *mulla* or *maulavi* who used Quran for this purpose. A name was given to the child which began with the first letter appearing right hand page when Quran was opened at random.³¹

The first tonsure of the male child among the Hindus was an important ceremony. The hair cutting or *mundan* was celebrated not earlier than the age of three. If the mother (or any other family member) had made a vow prior to the birth of her child to observe the rite at a certain shrine or temple, it was duly carried out there otherwise it might be done at home or as it was the custom with the family. An auspicious hour would be fixed by a Brahman or the rite would be performed on the marriage of a near kinsmen.³²

Upanayana (initiation) or *janeo* (sacred thread) ceremony was observed by the Hindus when the male child was between the age of seven to ten. This ceremony was conducted by a Brahman. A cord of cotton was made into three strings to be tied round the waist of the boy after reciting certain prayers over it. The sacred thread, consisting of three threads, each composed of three finer threads intertwined into one and cost about four *damris* (a small fraction of *paisa*) was then hung on the left shoulder of the boy, the ends tied round the right arm. The three threads represent the Trinity, the Hindu Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and the white colour signifies purity. The sacred thread was the distinguishing mark of the twice born. It was the symbol of regeneration.³³

Being thus invested with the sacred thread, the Hindu boy began his studies. An auspicious day fixed after consultation with an astrologer, the boy's parents would invite the school teacher. Usually the father presented rupees and sweets as a

³⁰ Maharaja Ranjit Singh also followed this practice and named his elder son, Kharak Singh. Kanhiya Lal, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Kirpal Singh), 15; Prem Singh Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 47; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 94-95; Joginder Singh, *Sikh Ceremonies*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1989, 4.

³¹ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 173.

³² K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1988, 178; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. I, 578; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 170.

³³ Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 103; P. Thomas, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners*, 77; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 178; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 77.

gift to the teacher.³⁴ Muslims performed *maktab* or *bismillah* (initiation) ceremony when the boy was four years, four months and four days old.³⁵ The teacher wrote down some letters of alphabet on a leaf perfumed with incense and sprinkled over with cucum root. It was taken round to be touched and blessed by the parents. Then the boy repeated these letters after the teacher and made obeisance before the Gods and sweetmeats were distributed.³⁶

Muslims performed ceremony of circumcision or *sunnat* when the boy was six or seven year old. The barber performed *sunnat* and the child was usually given a little opium or other opiate. This occasion was celebrated with great rejoicings according to the status and means of a family.³⁷

Marriage or *vivaha* constituted the most engrossing event of the life. For the several reasons marriage as an institution was held in high esteem by the society. It was considered as a sacrament union. The institution of marriage is a mechanism through which woman's sexuality can be controlled and her procreative capabilities can be channelised. For a Hindu, marriage was obligatory for begetting a son (heir), for discharging his debt to his ancestors and performing religious and spiritual duties. Wife was not merely a *grihapatni* but also *dharmapatni* and *sahadharmini*.³⁸ According to Sikhism, a superior and natural way of life had been married life (*grishstha*). Guru Amar Das gave importance to marriage as "bride and groom are not they who pose as one whole, bride and groom are they who are two bodies with

³⁴ *Sattan barsa da hoya dharmi, mulla de parhne payaya, rok rupiya te gur di reori, mullah de liyaya*. At the age of seven, Haqiqat Rai came to *mullah* (priest) for studies. For him, he brought some money and *reori* (sweet of small ball of solidified sugar covered with sesame). Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 17.

³⁵ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 178; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 174.

³⁶ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 172; M.A. Ansari, *Social Life Under the Mughals*, 178.

³⁷ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 178; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. I, 578; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 175.

³⁸ Paras Diwan, *Modern Hindu Law: Codified and Uncodified*, Allahabad Law Agency, Allahabad, 1988, 62-63; L.S.S.O. Malley, *Indian Castes and Customs*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1970,90; Surinder Kaur Jyoti, *Marriage Practices of the Sikhs*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1983, 8.

one soul”.³⁹ In fact, Sikhism upheld the householder’s life as an important adjunct to the spiritual life. Celibacy in Islam was condemned by the Prophet.⁴⁰ Married life and family was considered honourable, natural and ideal way of life. Being an important social ceremony it offered an occasion for feasts, gatherings and rejoicings.

The ceremonial aspect of the marriage and rituals associated with it are detailed one. Betrothal or *saggai*, *kurmai* was the first step in the preparations for the marriage which generally take place at an early age. It marked the confirmation of the desired alliance. Number of people were participating in marry making. For the preliminary negotiation people depended on the intermediaries called *bichola* or *lagi*.⁴¹ The professional intermediaries like priests (Brahmans), barbers (*nais*) and the bards (*dums* or *bhats*) played a significant role in making the marriage proposals.⁴² Usually they were the first to broach the subject. Often the first proposal amongst the Hindus was made by the girl’s parents. But it was not necessary because sometimes, boy’s parents too could approach to girl’s parents.⁴³ Among the Muslims it was generally started from the boy’s side. Before the commencement of the betrothal ceremonies the father of the boy and that of the girl came to an understanding by means of letters or through their *lagis*, relations or friends. The initiative in the matter of ceremonies was made by the girl’s father who sent their *lagi* or *bichola* with some money, clothes, ornaments, coconut, dried dates (*chhuaras*), rice and sugar called *shagan* for the bridegroom elect.⁴⁴ Contrary to the

³⁹ *Dan pir eh na aakhi ahi bhahi ikathe hoye, ek jot doye murti dhan pir kahiya sohe. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vara Suhi Mohalla, 3, 788.*

⁴⁰ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 175.

⁴¹ Paul Hershman, *Punjabi Kinship and Marriage*, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1981, 160.

⁴² Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), Patiala, 57; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 100-101; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, 59; Surinder Kaur Jyoti, *Marriage Practices of the Sikh*, 160; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District*, 1883-1884, 41; Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 160.

⁴³ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1963, 69; Surinder Kaur Jyoti, *Marriage Practices*, 150; P. Thomas, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners*, 78.

⁴⁴ *Trai lagi shagan liyae, bhat, prohat te nai.* Three messengers (*lagi*) bard, priest and barber brought the *shagan*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 19; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century, 1857-1947*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1963, 130; A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, Ess Ess Publication, New Delhi, 1978, 74.

Hindu *lagis*, a number of Muslim women with few men visited girl's house to perform the betrothal rites.⁴⁵

On the arrival of the *lagi*, a little oil was dropped at the door. This ceremony was called *tel chona*. With all the kinsmen assembled, the boy was seated in front of the *lagi* who put some sugar, dried dates, sugarcoat (*patasas*) and a coin into his lap. Sweets were distributed among all those present. This occasion was celebrated with rejoicings and called *kurmai* or *mangni*.⁴⁶ The parents of the boy could send some gifts to the girl in confirmation of betrothal.⁴⁷ The success of the relation depended on how the *lagis* behaved, it was customary among the parents to satisfy them with gifts and sometimes with ornaments.

After the *shagan* among the Hindus and Sikhs, a date for marriage (*lagan*) was fixed with reference to the convenience of the parties and the result of the examination of the horoscopes of the boy and the girl by a Brahman. It was equally important for both the parties to consult a Brahman or astrologer who calculate suitable date (*tithi*), propitious moment (*mahurat*) and day (*var*) for the marriage. This practice was called *saha sudhauna* or *gandh pauna*.⁴⁸ Theoretically Sikh marriage ceremony might be held on the fifth day of the light half of a month.⁴⁹ Among the Muslims it was called *gandh niqah* (fixation of date or day for wedding).⁵⁰ The girl was prevented from going outside the house after the *gandh* ceremony.

An intimation of the date was sent by the girl's father to the father of the boy by *saha di chithi* or *pili chithi* which was written by the Brahman with saffron and had some saffron sprinkled over it. It was delivered to the father of the boy by the

⁴⁵ H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab*, Vol. , 804.

⁴⁶ Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 101; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 91.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*; *Gazetteer of Sialkot District, 1883-84*, 35.

⁴⁸ *Khere saha sudhaya ke Brahmana tho, bhala tith mahurat vaar mian*. Khere (in-laws of Heer) consulted a Brahman for auspicious date, time and day. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), 72; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 101; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 84.

⁴⁹ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 32.

⁵⁰ In the observance of this rite a piece of cloth or a string was knotted as many times as there were days remaining till the wedding day. A knot was untied everyday by the parents. A similar knot was circulated among the relatives through the barbers. It was called *gandh pherna*.

Brahman or *nai* not less than eleven and not more than twenty one days before the actual date of the wedding.⁵¹

The most favourable season for marriage was the Spring, but the following months also possessed peculiar attributes: the month of *magh* (January-February) was said to bring a wealthy wife; *phagun* (February-March) a good manager; *baisakh* (April-May) and *jeth* (May-June) a dutiful helpmate; while marriage in *asarh* (June-July) were reputed to be very prolific. Marriages were not celebrated in the rainy season or *barsatan* (*chaumasa*) because the Gods were supposed to sleep and could not be invoked to bestow blessings on the happy couple and also doubtless because in this season the marriage parties could not travel about the country except at great inconvenience and discomfort. The lunar days in general and full moon days in particular, were considered auspicious for the marriage ceremony.⁵²

As soon as the actual date of the marriage drew near rich foods and varieties of sweetmeats were prepared called *bhaji* especially for the wedding. The *halvais* (confectioners) came with their enormous vessels and lit big fire to made mounds of sweets for the wedding feast according to means of the family for distribution.⁵³ Different kinds of sweetmeats like *shakarpare*, *jalabi*, *bundi*, *laddoo* etc. were prepared.⁵⁴ Ram Sukh Rao provided interesting details regarding to the confectioners who prepared sweetmeats in the wedding of Kanwar Nihal Singh. For example, the confectioners from Amritsar and other places had been invited to prepare sweetmeats at Kapurthala a month before the occasion. The bridegroom's father also made arrangements for preparation of sweetmeats simultaneously at Phagwara where the marriage party was to be received.⁵⁵

⁵¹ A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 76; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 84.

⁵² A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 76; Barjinder Kaur, *The Jats in the Punjab During Nineteenth Century*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 36.

⁵³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 130.

⁵⁴ "Lage nugdia talan te shakarpare, dhair lavande n evade ghevra de, tale khub jalab gulbhishat bundi, ladhu tikkia bhinre mewara de". Different kinds of sweetmeats were prepared in large quantity on the marriage occasion. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), 73.

⁵⁵ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 58.

Invitations were sent out through the *lagi* with *bhaji* to relatives and friends. Invitations were given according to their status. and number of the relatives. On the wedding of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh invited Governor General, the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Fane, Sir Charles Metcalfe, Governor of Agra, rulers of Patiala, Faridkot, Nabha, Jind, Malerkotla, Naraingarh and chiefs of Mandi and Suket.⁵⁶

A fortnight before the wedding both in the houses of the bride and the bridegroom, women and girls used to gather in the large courtyard to sing wedding songs. The songs were traditional, handed down the generations and were known as *suhag* to wish girl and *ghorian* to wish boy.⁵⁷ According to the Sikh *rahatmaryada* when only five days remained before the marriage the bride's diet should be *dal* and rice with *ghee*. She should not eat bread (*roti*). She should be clothed in red garments.⁵⁸ There were series of ceremonies to be performed during the last two days. *Watna* was anointed to the bodies of the bride and groom respectively. This ceremony was called *maian pauna* and *tel charhauna*. After *maian pauna*, boy was banned from going outside the house.⁵⁹ In the marriage of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh applied *watna* on his face with his own hands. Sister in-law of the Maharaja took the pleasure of rubbing the *watna* and the oil on the beard of the Maharaja and received 500 rupees, but in lieu of 500 rupees she desired for a *jagir* and the Maharaja immediately issued a letter for the grant of a *jagir*.⁶⁰ After the *watna*, the ceremony of *tel charhauna* took place. The Maharaja threw 500 rupees, some sovereigns and gold ducats into the oil, whereupon, all chieftains and Jawand Singh Mokal put 100 rupees each therein. Kanwar Kharak Singh, Raja Kalan, Raja Hira Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Sardar Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, *mian* Udham and other chieftains came forward and performed the ceremony of the oil.⁶¹

⁵⁶ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 18; P.S. Hoti, *Sher-i-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 88.

⁵⁷ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 130.

⁵⁸ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 33.

⁵⁹ *Watna* was a thick paste consisting of gram flour, turmeric and mustard oil having the property of making the skin soft. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 441-442; Daftar III (I-III) III, 436; Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 19; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 33; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 101.

⁶⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) III, 436; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 188.

⁶¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III) III, 436.

Among the Muslims, *nikasi* rite was observed a day or two before the wedding. In this rite the boy, dressed in his new clothes, with the *kangana* on his wrist and a chaplet of flowers tied round his head, was mounted on a mare and taken to a mosque, where prayers were performed by him and the congregation. On his return he went round the whole town and taken to some other house until the wedding party set out at night.⁶²

On the actual day of marriage, bathing ceremony (*nawai dhuwai*) of the bridegroom and bride was performed. The bridegroom was made seated on a stool called *khara* (*pathra*) during these ceremonies and a sheet of red cloth (*phulkari*) was held over him and the women of his *biradari* sang the songs. He was bathed by the *lagis* and wrapped in red cloth. While leaving the *khara* he broke five *chapnis* (covers of earthen vessels), previously placed near it, by jumping on them from the *khara*. This ritual was called *chappan bhannana* signified good omen for married couple.⁶³ The water carrier (*jhiwar*) who supplied water and the barber who assisted in the bathing were given their *lags*.⁶⁴

In the bride's house, the girls brought water from the village well to perform the bathing ceremony, called *ghari gharoli*.⁶⁵ After this the girls smeared bride's hands and feet with henna (*mehndi*). She wore *chura* (red and white bangles) and *nath* (nose ring), usually given by her maternal uncle which was a symbol of her married status and *nath* among Hindus was considered auspicious for her husband's longevity.⁶⁶ After adorning these ornaments, multi coloured thread called *gana* or *kangana* was tied round her wrist and she was told by her girl friends who were now in constant attendance to tie *gana* really tight because it would have to be opened by her husband when he took her home. *Gana* was also tied to the bridegroom.⁶⁷ During this period the women folk of both families assembled and sang. These marriage

⁶² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 106.

⁶³ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 20; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 85.

⁶⁴ Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 306; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 85.

⁶⁵ *Bhari ghari gharoli te kuri naati*. The pitcher was filled with water and girl bathes. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. J.S. Sital), 76.

⁶⁶ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 131; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, 282.

⁶⁷ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 131; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies*, 85.

songs were repositories of great information and expression of love and affection shared by the family members.

On the day of wedding, the bridegroom attired a gorgeous dress with a *sehra* or chaplet. Among the Hindus and Sikhs, a *mukey* was crowned over turban. The chaplet was made of mica and tinsel paper and faced with fringe of gold threads as a screen from the evil eye. This ceremony was called *sehra bandi*.⁶⁸ Sikh *rahatnama*, 'Prem Sumarag' has given description of marriage dress of a Sikh, 'a Sikh should don white clothing, the shirt should open at front and the trousers may be whatever kind. Over them he should put on cotton stockings and underneath he should wear short breeches. Every garment should be white. Finally he should put on a sword-belt. He may wear a jewel bracelet, a jewel turban ornament and a necklace of silver coins. His head-dress should be a golden *sehra* with strings of genuine pearls thus suspended over his face. Put a garland of flowers around his neck and another on his head. Sprinkle saffron on his clothing.'⁶⁹ On this occasion the assembled relatives pronounced blessings on the bridegroom by bestowing gifts in cash. It was called *tambol*. Large sums in cash were given as *tambol* among the rich.⁷⁰ Sohan Lal Suri gives a detailed description of *tambol* ceremony of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh as follows:

“*Granthis of Darbar Sahib rupees 125, bhai Piara Singh rupees 100, — — — — bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram rupees 1,500, bhai Gurmukh Singh rupees 1,500; the British Commander-in-chief rupees 15,000; Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha rupees 15,000, — — — — Sarkar (queen) Nakain rupees 15, 000; Glorious Prince rupees 21,000; Sardar Nihal Singh Ahluwalia rupees 11,000, Raja Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia rupees 5,000; Gul Begum rupees 500 each of the four Sarkars (queens) connected with the throne rupees 800, Sarkar Katochan rupees 500; — — — Raja Gulab Singh rupees 51,000; Jamadar Khushal Singh rupees 28,000; Sandhawalia rupees 21,000;*

⁶⁸ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.Ganda Singh), 20; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 35; A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 77.

⁶⁹ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 35.

⁷⁰ *Jad tambol da hoye vela, lage rupiye pawan*. On the Occasion of *tambol*, money was showered. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.Ganda Singh), 21; F. S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 190.

_____ *ghorchara khas*, rupees 7,000; officers of the platoons of Court Sahib rupees 11,500 _____ *Fakir Aziz-ud-din, Fakir Imam-ud-din and khalifa Nur-ud-din* rupees 3,300; _____ *pandit Madhusudan* rupees 225; _____ *Lala Mohal Lal Suri* *vakil* rupees 100 _____ *province of Kashmir* rupees 1, 11, 000; _____ *regular troops* rupees 3,28,074”.⁷¹

After the *tambol* or *neudra* ceremony, the bridegroom was mounted on a mare while his younger brother or a relative (*sarbala*) sat behind him. The occasion of wedding procession was called *janj charhni*.⁷² The bridegroom usually rode on the mare, the elephant and sometimes on chariot.⁷³ Just at the same time *bhabhi* (brother’s wife) put *surma* (antimony) into bridegroom’s eyes and his sisters held the reins of his mare. By doing so they received money from the bridegroom as a token of *surma pavai* and *vag pharai*.⁷⁴ On completion of these ceremonies, the wedding party (*barat*) accompanied by a band left for the place appointed for their reception by the bride’s father. It is customary for the party to visit a religious place on the way and there they made their humble prostration before reaching bride’s place.

On the occasion of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh’s marriage the wedding party visited Harmandir Sahib and offered their prayers as *ardas*.⁷⁵ Number of *baratis* probably depended on the status of the family. In 1812, on the wedding of Kanwar Kharak Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered the march of his royal standards from Lahore to Amritsar and all the triumphant troops and glorious chieftains and special *ghorcharas* received orders from the Maharaja to present themselves in fine and rich clothes for marriage procession.⁷⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, described marriage procession of Kanwar Kharak Singh as follow:

⁷¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III, 441-442.

⁷² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 86, 110.

⁷³ *Chari janj hoe aswari, rath goreiya de aye*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.Ganda Singh), 21, A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 77.

⁷⁴ *Kahun ji bhain bhanji waag phari, kahun mohran de panj divaye*. Sister and niece, seized the strings of the mare of the bridegroom (*Haqiqat Rai*) and received five *mohars*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.Ganda Singh), 21; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 135.

⁷⁵ Maharaja Ranjit Singh made an *ardas* of Rs. 1,100 at Harmandir Sahib in addition to his usual *ardases* at *Akal Bunga, Jhanda Bunga, Shahid Bunga, Gharyali Bunga, Dukh Bhanjani* and *Baba Atal*. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 443.

⁷⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 114.

*“The Maharaja rode from the fort of Gobindgarh and reached the fort of Bhangis. Fireworks of all kinds were displayed. A moving throne and “shalabagh” which were adorned and decorated with various kinds of flowers were carried over the shoulders of about 100 men up to neighbourhood of the garden of Tara Singh, where they were placed. After this glorious tents and well equipped canopies and shamianas were sent towards Fatehgarh, and the glorious prince was made to sit upon an elephant and that light of the garden of kindness, that women accustomed to observe veil behind the screen of chastity, the mother of the prince was made to sit in a chariot that was set with jewellery and had a crown over it. Thus they were made to proceed to Fatehgarh, twenty nine elephants went with the procession. On the first elephant rode Fakir Raza and Devi Dass, on the second bhaya Ram Singh, on the third Ilahi Bakhsh darogha of artillery along with topchi. On the fourth Jamadar Khushal Singh, on the fifth Dewan Bhawani Dass, on the sixth and the rest of glorious chieftains and Rajas of the mountainous regions and all the special nearest attendants of the Maharaja rode side by side with him. As soon as they reached near Fatehgarh, a firing of guns with great éclat took place’.*⁷⁷

Kanhiya Lal estimated, five lakhs guests gathered in the marriage of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.⁷⁸ Probably he wished to state that it was a big wedding procession.

The arrival of the wedding party in bride’s village or town was termed as *janj dhukni*. Money was thrown over the bridegroom’s head to be picked up by beggars and needy.⁷⁹ The wedding party was welcomed by the bride’s father, being conducted to a suitable place for its stay. Sham Singh Attariwala, father-in-law of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, greeted the marriage procession with a discharge of *topkhana*. He came on foot to receive the Maharaja and led him to his own *haveli*

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Daftar II, 117.

⁷⁸ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 334.

⁷⁹ In the wedding of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave two thousand rupees and five hundred silver ducats to the all Sardars, chieftains and attendents for the showering over the poor and needy. Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 335; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 190.

and offered 11 horses and 101 gold ducats to the Maharaja, 251 ducats each to Kanwar Kharak Singh, Nau Nihal Singh, Sher Singh, Raja Kalan and Jamadar Khushal Singh and gave something to the other chieftains, according to their rank and position.⁸⁰

While the *barat* was still away from the residence of the bride, some rites were performed. Among the Hindus, bridegroom's father sent sweetmeats and some gifts including a *dhoti* (cloth to be wrapped round the waist) for the bride's use. This rite was known as *kuar-dhoti-da-shagan*.⁸¹ At the twilight, the wedding party moved to the bride's house. The occasion was celebrated with music, dance and fireworks. The bride's father, brothers and kinsmen stood and waited outside the house. Then the meeting ceremony was held called *milni*. The bridegroom's father embraced the bride's father and latter made some presents or money according to his means. The maternal uncle of the boy and that of the girl then embraced each other in the same way. *Lagis* assisted them in exchange of gifts. Their respective bards, *bhats* and *dums* recited their genealogies. They received their usual dues at time.⁸² The procession then proceeded to the place set apart for them and the bridegroom was sent to the women's apartments where some rituals were performed and practical jokes played with the groom. The sisters and friends of the bride passed a lot of filthy and embarrassing remarks against the bridegroom. As indicated by Waris Shah, at such time quite embarrassing and suggestive remarks were made for the bridegroom somewhat familiar and little free with each other. The groom was supposed to utter some rough verse called *chhand bandi* or *bhasha*.⁸³ At this time some rituals were also performed. The earthen lamp (*diva*) was placed in a sieve (*chhanani*) which was hung in the middle of the doorway. In order to test his marksmanship, the groom was required to remove the *diva* out of *chhanani* with his

⁸⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 444; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 190-191.

⁸¹ *Ghio maid te chawal bakre bheje bahut masale, kuar dhoti da shagan kit one, lai gaye haloofe wale*. Father of bride sent rice, flour, ghi, he goats and spices to bridegroom. They performed rite of *kuar dhoti da shagan* and money was taken by the *lagis*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed.Ganda Singh), 21; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 283-84.

⁸² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 86, 110; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *Hindustan Sikh Wedding Ceremonies with Salient Features of Hindu and Sikh Rituals*, Star Publication, New Delhi, 2002, 37; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 284.

⁸³ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 137-38; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 285.

sword. This was called *chhanani jorna*.⁸⁴ The bride escorted by her friends was made to pass under the mare of the groom. A finger ring was obtained from the groom by the girls and was put into the bride's finger.⁸⁵

The actual wedding that is *niqah* among the Muslims and *lavan phere* according to Vedic rituals among the Hindus and Sikhs was conducted on the first night after the arrival of the bridegroom's party. The *phera* ceremony took place before sunrise in the courtyard of the girl's house under an awning consisting of four posts driven into the ground with a red cloth spread over them was called *mandapa* or *vedi*. The banana plants were put as pillars and a top covering was made of twigs and mango foliage. Inside the pavilion were placed two new square reed baskets upside to serve as stools.⁸⁶ The marriage ceremony commenced with the worship of Lord Ganesh and was performed in accordance with the Vedic rites.⁸⁷ The boy appeared first and was made to sit on the northern stool with a piece of wood of the *ber* tree under his feet. Then the father of the bride welcomes the bridegroom in the prescribed form by offering water to wash his feet and by the well known oblation called the *arghya*.⁸⁸ The bride then appeared in red *lahanga* or gown, rich and beautiful, for red was a bride's colour in the Punjab. She was bedecked with gold jewellery from head to feet, one special piece for each part of the body.⁸⁹ The bride was also seated over southern stool (*chaunki*). The priest prepared a square place on the ground over which flour was spread. Many divisions were marked in the square with the name of planets inserted in them to obtain favourable omens. It was called *chaunk purna*.⁹⁰

The priest performed the ritual by reading sacred verses from the *vedas*, called *lavan-parna*. The bridegroom preceded the bride as they walk around the pit,

⁸⁴ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 87; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 285.

⁸⁵ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 285.

⁸⁶ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 51; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 131; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 180.

⁸⁷ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 57; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 57.

⁸⁸ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 88.

⁸⁹ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 34; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*; 132, Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 79.

⁹⁰ Chaunk puriya khara aade. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 21; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 287.

keeping it on their right side.⁷⁸ The girl's father performed a ceremony signifying the formal gift of his daughter to the bridegroom known *kanyadan*. It was also called *hathlewa*.⁹¹ The couple had the hems of their garments knotted together by the women to signify their perpetual and inseparable union, this being the ceremony of *gandh chitrna*.⁹² At the end of these came the final ceremony of the seven steps (*lavan*) in circumambulation among Hindus and four steps among Sikhs round the sacred fire. Fire was to be lighted as a witness to the wedlock. The *prohit* chanted *mantras* and the womenfolk sang wedding songs while the couple and bride's nearest relations were helping them in completing their rounds. The bridegroom preceded the bride as they walk around the *vedi*, keeping it on their right. Their walking around the holy fire was called *phera-laina*.⁹³ Kanwar Nau Nihal's wedding was also performed in accordance with vedic rites.⁹⁴ According to *rahatmariyada*, *granthi* or priest performed Sikh marriage ceremony. After the four rounds, *khande da pahul* was administered to the couple. Five *pauris* of *anand* was sung and then *karha prashad* was distributed.⁹⁵ The *phera* ceremony was essential for the completion of the marriage because when they walked around the sacred fire seven times they took their seven wedding vows. The final and eventful step made them husband and wife before God.⁹⁶

At the time when the nuptial rites were being performed, the mother of the bridegroom in her own house, in company of her female relatives, put her feet in water mixed with milk and asked the old women to give her son and daughter-in-law their blessing that as the milk mingled with the water so they might ever live in loving kindness with each other. This rite was called *lassi pair*.⁹⁷

⁹¹ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 51; Ramesh C. and Urmila Dogra, *Hindustan Sikh Wedding Ceremonies with Salient Features of Hindu and Sikh Rituals*, 19, 144.

⁹² Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 21; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, 181; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 287.

⁹³ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 51; Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 139.

⁹⁴ *Pare likhe purohita, aag machaun wale, singh de name purbak Hindua di pustak to kahani parke _____ aag de duale parkarma karwai*. Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 231.

⁹⁵ W.H. Mcleod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa*, 105.

⁹⁶ *Gazetteer of Lahore District, 1883-1884*, 51; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 102; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 141.

⁹⁷ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 88.

Among the Muslims, the *qazi* or the learned *mullah* was called upon at the time of *niqah* and made to sit on a carpet spread over the ground amidst the assembly of other males. Two responsible persons were chosen as witnesses (*gawah*) and one as agent (*vakil*).⁹⁸ The *qazi* invoked the blessings of the God and recited the *kalma* five times along with the *sifat-i-imam*. After defining the rules of the *shariat* he sought the formal consent of the boy and the girl through *vakil* and the *gawahs*. In theory, mutual consent of the marriage partners to marriage was the most important but the will of the parents reigned supreme in reality. The *qazi* made the girl to recite the *kalma* and asked her whether she consented to become the wife of so and so. She replied in the affirmative or else an affirmative reply was presumed from her silence, and then they came out and announced it, and the boy consented himself three times by saying *qabul hai*, and in this way the ceremony was completed.⁹⁹

After the marriage ceremony, the marriage party was entertained with various sweetmeats.¹⁰⁰ For entertainment of *baratis* dancers, acrobats and bards were invited.¹⁰¹ The wedding festivities lasted for any number of days according to the means of the bride's people and according to their mutual arrangements. The minimum stay for the bridegroom's party was fixed for a day and maximum for ten days.¹⁰²

On the eve of departure of the bridegroom's party, *vari* was displayed by the boy's father. *Vari* or *vara sui* consisted of clothes, ornaments and dry fruits was sent to the bride. The girl's parents kept some of these articles for immediate use and the

⁹⁸ *Qazi sadya paran niqah nu'*. The *qazi* was called for performing *niqah*. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 77-78; Barjinder Kaur, *Jats in the Punjab*, 36.

⁹⁹ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 285-286; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 111.

¹⁰⁰ *Bhant-bhant de bani mathayi khawan mitr piarey, bedana bundi te jalebi, barfi, shakarpore, laddu, kutabkhanian, ghariyan aur chuharey, Agra gheo kacchorian, madey de bhalle*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 22; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 102.

¹⁰¹ *Kanjarian de sadde taiphey bazigar te baashey, ek nachan ek nakalan karde lok jo pawan hasse*. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 22.

¹⁰² *Trai raatin janj rahi uthain khijmat bahut kito ne*, Haqiqat Rai's *barat* was stayed for three days and well entertained by bride's parents. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 22; A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 78; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 182.

rest were sent back.¹⁰³ At the end, the bride's father presented the dowry (*khat*). It was displayed in the courtyard on the beds (*charpoys*). The bride's friends and relatives came to look at the *daj*.¹⁰⁴ The elder women examined it with critical eyes. In fact dowry was a symbol of family's social and financial status. A poor might spend his life's earning on his daughter's dowry. The dowry included clothes, kitchen utensils, jewels, household material, animals and sometimes cash. The description of dowry of Grand daughter-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was given by Sohan Lal Suri in detailed. Her dowry consisting of suits of clothes which made 'tewar' and 'bewar', four suits of clothes made of gold, 101 camels, horses, cows, buffaloes and sheep, six elephants, many pieces of ornaments and utensils made of gold and silver and rupees 11,000 in cash.¹⁰⁵

The departure of the bride, called *vidai*, marked a symbolic separation between the daughter and parents. On the departure of the bridegroom and bride there was a ceremony in which the bridegroom and his friends had to fight their way to had to bribe and in another ceremony the bridegroom had to bribe the maidens to restore a stolen article or to let him pass the gates with his bride.¹⁰⁶ The bride was seated in the *doli* (palanquin), covered with a red cloth with white trimmings placed near the front door. On her departure from her parents' house, some of the touching songs were sung by the womenfolk and there was much shedding of tears.¹⁰⁷

When the bridal party returned home, on their arrival in the town or the village, the procession moved slowly through the bazaar with great splendour. The boy mounted on a mare proceeds first and the girl was borne after him in *doli*.¹⁰⁸ When the couple reached at the home, sisters and relatives of the boy receive them with due honour. They sing certain songs signified their arrival.¹⁰⁹ The mother of the boy waved a *gharwa* or utensil full of water seven times over their head and drank it.

¹⁰³ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 89; Barjinder Kaur *Jats in the Punjab*, M.Phil Dissertation, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 22; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 89.

¹⁰⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (I-III), 446; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 195.

¹⁰⁶ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, 182.

¹⁰⁷ Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 143; Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 80.

¹⁰⁸ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ *Aggon lain aaiyan kurian vohtri nu je tu aandri (ve) veeran gaiyo ne*. Girls came forward to received the bride and sang song, "you brought a bride." Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 80.

This was called *pani-varna*,¹¹⁰ which mean that she, with pleasure and for her son's love, took on herself every misfortune that may in future time befall on either of them. Some mustard oil was poured on the threshold and the couple entered the house. *Khichari* (mixture of rice and pluse) or *churi* (bread mixed with butter and sugar) were put into the bride's mouth seven times. Then the younger brother of the bridegroom (*dewar*) was seated in the bride's lap as a sign that she should have sons.¹¹¹ She then presented *nazars* to the elder relatives of her husband, and in return got presents and clothes from them.¹¹²

Another ritual *til-khelna* was also performed by the senior relatives of the boy. The ritual signified that they wish the bride to bear male children as numerous as the sesamum seeds which fall on the ground. They gave a handful of seeds to the bride which she returns at once.¹¹³ The bridegroom was asked to hand over his purse containing money to his wife. She was at liberty to take any amount out of it to be spent at her pleasure. This signified that the husband entrusted to the care of his wife all his worldly goods. She then promised that she would spend nothing without his knowledge. To convert the bride into her husband's *got* all the women of the family, including the girl, ate rice and sweetmeats together from same dish. It was called *got kulana* or *got kumala*.¹¹⁴

After a day, the ceremony of untying the wrist thread or *gana* was conducted when bride and the bridegroom joined hands in untying the *ganas* of each other.¹¹⁵ A similar ceremony was called the game of *lassi mundari*. Some *lassi* (butter-milk) was put into *parat* (metal tray). Then a ring, one cowrie and one rupee were thrown into it. The couple was required to find the ring and pick it out. The occasion was enjoyed by the womenfolk. It was customary to make thanks offerings to their

¹¹⁰ *Paani vaar ke pita mata, chir jeewe jug taen*. The boy's mother drank the water after waiving and blessed for long life. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 22.

¹¹¹ *De churi te khichari diyan sat burkan, nadha dewar good bhahayo ne*. Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 81; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 290.

¹¹² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 90.

¹¹³ *Jitney dharti til girsi, utne vohti putt jenesi*. May the bride bear as many sons as sesamum seeds have fallen to the ground. H.A. Rose *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 90.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ganre de din aan pugge*. The days of *Ganas* were arrived, Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, 83; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 290.

family's sacred places.¹¹⁶ The ceremony of *muklawā* or *gaona* was usually observed when the girl was too young for the consummation of marriage. The husband with some relatives after a period varied from 1 to 3 year from the date of marriage carried back his wife. His father-in-law on this occasion gave him some clothes and jewels.¹¹⁷

Like the birth and marriage, death too had its own set of rites which were very scrupulously performed but unlike them, the occasion of death was characterized by demonstration of grief. When a person was about to die, some pre-death rituals were observed. Among the Hindus and the Sikhs when no signs of improvements were shown a space of ground near his *charpoy* (cot) or some other, was smeared with cow-dung and grass scattered over it. To die on a bed, was considered as a religious demerit or inauspicious. On the grass a sheet was spread and the dying person was laid on it, or on the ground with his feet to the east. This cot was laid in the courtyard where the dying person gave away the cows and other things in charity called *gow-daan* as was customary in the last moments.¹¹⁸ The dying person would pour a few drops of water into the Brahman's hands symbolizing abstinence in life before death, called *chuli-chhadna*.¹¹⁹ An earthen lamp (*diva*) with a long wick (*vatti*), which was lit, placed near the dying person's hand, supposedly to light his way to heaven.¹²⁰ Ganga *jal* and leaves of *tulsi* were poured into his mouth and the priest began chanting *mantars*. It is believed that listening and recitation of verses

¹¹⁶ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 83; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 90.

¹¹⁷ Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 102; A.H. Bingley, *History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 78; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, 182.

¹¹⁸ At the last moments of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he was made to lie straight upon a bed, which had been set right with all the requisites of the last day, like *doshalas*, *tulsi* leaves, gold ducats, linseed and so on, and lighting up a gold lamp, gave it away by way of *samkalap* along with other things. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III, 452 ; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 202; Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 53; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 72.

¹¹⁹ Jafar Beg, *Si-harif Sarkar ki*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Maharaja*, Kalam Mandir Lower Madal, Patiala, 19787, 86-88.; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 238.

¹²⁰ Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 58; Matthew Dennis (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Holidays and Celebrations*, Vol. I, 578; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 185-186.

draw his attention to one direction and that if he died he would not suffer any difficulty at the time of death.¹²¹

Among the Muslims *imam zaman ka rupiya* and amulets were used to escape death. Some goats were also sacrificed. Holy water or *sharbat* from the *zamzam* well at Mecca was poured to facilitate exit of vital spark. The face of dying person was usually turned towards *qibla* (direction of Mecca). *Sura-i-yasin* or other verses relating to pardon for sins were read near him and he also recite them.¹²²

As soon as the shadow of the angel of death falls on a dying person, the first duty of his (or her) kinsfolk was to give him a ceremonial bath. It was performed by the male or female relatives in accordance with the sex of the deceased. For the bath hot water with *ber* leaves bathed in it, soap and sweetened things such as rose water, camphor, sandal etc. were required. The body was laid on a wooden board with its sheet, only the washer man or woman and the nearest of kin remaining inside. The clothes of the dead were given to the washer man or to a poor. The washer man gave him a bath and used towel to dry it and the body was covered with a clean generally unstitched cloth. In some cases scents were also sprinkled on the body to serve as disinfectants.¹²³ If the deceased was a man of high caste (Brahman or Khatri), the *tilak* was applied to his forehead and *janeo* placed round his neck.¹²⁴ Among Sikhs a new pair of *kachh* (underwear) was worn on the body of the deceased and a sword was placed on its right side.¹²⁵ In 1839, on the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his body was put up on a wooden stool in a sitting posture, given bath with water brought specially from Hardwar for the purpose. A turban was put up on his head with a suit of clothes perfumed with saffron. The body of deceased Maharaja was

¹²¹ *Bhai* Gobind Ram uttered the Words, "Ram Ram" in to the ear of Maharaja Ranjit Singh three times at the moment he was expiring and the Maharaja repeated them twice. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (Pbi), 452; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 203; Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 148-149.

¹²² P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 189; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 180.

¹²³ After the death of Bhag Singh Ahluwalia his body was bathed in the Ganges water, and anointed according to the Vedic rites. Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed. Joginder Kaur), 59; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 72; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 183.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹²⁵ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 73.

decorated with ornaments, such as a bejewelled plume, a bejewelled turban gem, a bejewelled hand chain, a pearl necklace, an armlet and a diamond ring.¹²⁶

Among the Muslims, while performing *ghussal*, a shroud cut in two, was spread over the bed and the body was laid on one half and covered with the other down to the knees. Verses from the Quran were written on the shroud with burnt charcoal or clay. Camphor dissolved in rose water was painted on every joint. The lower sheet was then wrapped round the corpse and knotted at three places, on the head, on the waist and over the feet. A copy of Quran was placed at the head of the body and the nearest of kin, friends and others were shown the face of the deceased for the last time, accompanied with weeping. Sometimes the toes of the hands and feet were tied together with a piece of cloth which was called *zanakh*. Similarly a piece of cloth was tied round the head across the chin to shut the mouth. This was called *taht-ul-hanak*.¹²⁷

The body was invariably clothed, among Hindus, a man's body being dressed in white and the woman whose husband was still living was decked in her finery, a new set of bangles being put on her wrist. Sandalwood paste, white clay, jasmine oil mixed with saffron, essence of roses etc. were used for her last toilet, in accordance with the deceased's means.¹²⁸

The funeral procession called *arathi*, *janaza* or *mazal* started from home to cremation ground, usually situated near a river bank, was headed by the chief mourners. Hindus and Sikhs tied dead body to a stretcher of bamboos called *takhta* or *baban*. In the case of rich persons it would be made of costly sandalwood.¹²⁹ The bier of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was constructed in the shape of a ship. It was wrought with gold, the sails and flags were made of the richest silk, embroidered with gold.

¹²⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 486; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (Jit Singh Sital), 350; F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 203.

¹²⁷ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 184-185.

¹²⁸ Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 150; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 141; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, 186.

¹²⁹ Agar Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), *Punjab Dian Varan*, 48.

The vessels were placed on a board on which the body of Maharaja lay.¹³⁰ By contrast, the Muslims placed the corpse on a bedstead (*palangh* or *manjah*)¹³¹

The chief mourner who was the eldest son or some very near relative of the dead person led the procession. He carried a firepot in his hand. When the body was tied to the bier the first *pind* or ball made of rice, *ghee* was placed on the deceased's breast. The bier was then lifted on to the shoulders of four near kinsmen of the deceased, called *kandha dena*. As soon, as the body was taken out of the door of the house, second *pind* was offered. The third *pind* being offered when it had passed the gate of the village or town.¹³²

Among the Muslims, when the procession was started special prayers were performed by the priest or *imam* who was especially called. The assembled stood in rows, called *saffan-bannhana*. The priest would go to the dead body and usher *taqbir* (i.e. *allah-hu-akbar*) four times in a loud voice so that Munkir and Nakir, the two angles, recording all the sins of his life, go away thinking him to be a true Muslim. All other standing in the rows would then recite certain verses like *kalam-i-darud* and *qul-fil-hal* from the Quran for the peace and benefit of the departed soul. This was called *namaz-i-janaza*.¹³³

Funeral procession among the Hindus and the Sikhs was accompanied by the musicians (*rababis*) reciting the words “*Ram Ram*” or “*Ram naam such hai*” (the name of Ram is truth itself) and *Satnaam Waheguru*, *Satnaam Waheguru* respectively.¹³⁴ According to Sikh tradition all mourners should be Sikhs.¹³⁵ In the case of rich or old man, flowers and coins were showered over the bier. Thousands

¹³⁰ W.G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, Her Majesty's Office, London, 1966, Fig no.16, 28; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 188; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, 535.

¹³¹ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 299-300.

¹³² H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 143.

¹³³ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 189; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 300.

¹³⁴ Henry Court *History of the Sikhs* 103; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 189; Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 151.

¹³⁵ W.H. Mcleod, *Sikhs of the khalsa, A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, 2003, 106.

of rupees were thrown over the funeral procession of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as alm, and charity among the poor and needy.¹³⁶

When the bier had gone half way between the house or village and the burning ground, the ceremony of *adhmarg* (half way) was performed.¹³⁷ The bier was put down on the ground and the head of the corpse was laid towards south and the feet towards the north. The ceremony of *adhmarg* was performed according to the advice of maha Brahmans or *acharaj* (*charji*).¹³⁸ A mixture of rice, barley etc. was prepared and distributed in the name of deceased and also pitcher containing of water, with which the deceased had been given a bath, was given away. The pitcher had to be dropped in such a way that its neck also broke, to prevent death visiting the family again too soon.¹³⁹ Fourth *pind* was also offered at the *adhmarg*. Before the fourth *pind* was offered, water was sprinkled on the ground and the bier was set down, the first *pind* being replaced by the fourth.¹⁴⁰ This rite was called 'basa dena', or the 'rest giving' and the place of the halt was termed *bisram*, or the rest. Here too, the bier was turned round so that the head of the corpse was now in front, though the same four kinsmen continued to carry it.¹⁴¹ Muslim had a little different practice, they stopped at short distance from the burial ground laid down the bier and uttered some funeral prayers. They did not bow the head at this rite and only invoke blessings for the departed soul.¹⁴²

Among the Hindus and the Sikhs the final putting of a pyre was termed as *chhikha*. The purest wood for the funeral pyre was sandal wood, which was however, rarely used owing to its cost.¹⁴³ Sandalwood was used by the rich and common people used the wood of *peepal*, *dak* and *beri* tree.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes the wood was carried by the mourners themselves. A pyre should be so constructed in a

¹³⁶ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (Jit Singh Sital), 350; S.M. Latif, *History of the Sikhs*, 494.

¹³⁷ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 143.

¹³⁸ *Acharaj* Braman who perform funeral ceremonies among the Hindus. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 221; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs* 103.

¹³⁹ Suri, *Umdat* Daftar IV, 119; Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 151.

¹⁴⁰ The *adhmarg* ceremony of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was performed when the bier was passed out of the Roshanai gate. Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 488.

¹⁴¹ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 143.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁴³ *Chikha banaie chandan di, chandan de kill lage*. The funeral pyre of Haqiqat Rai was made of sandal wood and nails were also of sandal, Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 48.

¹⁴⁴ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under Mughals*, 187.

rectangular pit some two feet deep. The big and heavy logs were placed at the bottom, the smaller one, the still smaller logs formed rest for head and feet. There the corpse should be placed between wooden boards and *panchratan*s (five metals) of gold, pearl, copper, silver and coral put in the mouth. In the case of woman this was done at the house.¹⁴⁵ When the pyre had been completed the fifth and last *pind* was offered and the valuable shawl or other cloth removed from the corpse was given to a sweeper or a *maha* Brahman. The body was then unfastened the cords which bind it to the bier being broken with one hand one foot and lay on the pyre. The body was laid supine upon the pyre, its hands being placed behind and so underneath it to prevent its being cruel in the future life. The shroud was tore near the mouth and ghee was put into the eyes, ears, nostrils etc. and covered with a few pieces of wood and then smaller logs with some big ones on top again. The eldest son, the younger brother in case of male or female and a husband in case of a wife took the burning grass in his hand and walk once right round the pyre, keeping it on his right hand, and then turn back until he reached the feet. Here they halted and throw the burning grass on to the pyre.¹⁴⁶ Incense and ghee were then poured all over the pyre. Sohan Lal Suri gives description of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's funeral pyre as follow:-

*"The Sarkar was made to sit in branches of sandalwood after a bath in his own garden near the gate just at the foot of the Padshahi masjid. The ladies performed the parkarma and made prostrations; while Kattochan (queen) joined the burning, placing the head of the Sarkar on her thigh. All the Sardars rested their heads upon the ground in prostration and later on sprinkled, clarified butter and with some rubbish straw and Kharak Singh set fire to the corpse".*¹⁴⁷

The Muslims on reaching the graveyard dug the grave from north to south. It has two chambers, the lower, called *lahad*, in which the body was placed being as

¹⁴⁵ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 143; Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 151.

¹⁴⁶ Parkash Tondon, *Punjabi Century*, 153; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under Mughals*, 187.

¹⁴⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar III (IV-V), 488-489.

long as a man's height. The face of the body was kept towards the *qibla*, because according to Mohammadan belief the dead shall rise up on the day of Judgement (*qayamat*) with their face towards the Mecca.¹⁴⁸ In *lahad*, the body was finally placed with the shroud removed. Then the *mullah* asked to write the *kalima sharif* with a stick on a mud brick which was put in the grave, and the *mullah* called all to recite *surat-ikhlas* over seven clods of earth and put them together near the head of the deceased. Most of the Shias and some Sunnis placed a written paper called *ahdnama* (agreement) in the deceased's mouth in the grave. This 'agreement' contained a declaration by him of the principles and doctrines of Islam and it was placed on him with the idea that he might not be terrified at the questions put to him by Munkir and Nakir when they appeared before him with their dreadful looks but answer them with the aid of the agreement. Then the *lahad* was filled up with stones and bricks. The upper part of the grave was then filled in with earth by all the mourners except the deceased's heirs. The members of the funeral party now recited the *fatiha* or verses from the Quran for the benefit of the departed soul.¹⁴⁹ Food was distributed to the poor. This food was called *toshe ki roti* or bread for the journey.¹⁵⁰

Among the Hindus and the Sikhs, when the body was nearly consumed, another rite was performed, called *kapal kirya* (breaking of the skull). According to the Hindus, *kapal kirya* took place at a time when the soul separates from the body and going into the brain took the form of enclosed wind whereupon a stick was struck against the head to break it and the wind was allowed to go out.¹⁵¹ After *kapal kirya*, the mourners returned to some well or tank where all of them bathed and wash their clothes. After bath the ceremony of *tinka torna* or breaking of straw was performed. All the young and old hold straw in their hands while the *acharaj* Brahman recited certain quotations or *shaloks* before every one of them. The meaning of *shalok* was that the dead had gone, therefore, nobody should grieve for it. After listening *shaloks*, everybody would pluck a blade of grass and break it in

¹⁴⁸ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under Mughals*, 190. H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 189-190.

¹⁴⁹ Lakh Shah, *Qissa Sassi Punnun*, 101; P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under Mughals*, 198.

¹⁵⁰ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 187.

¹⁵¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 121; Daftar III (IV-V), 489; W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 74; A.H. Bingley, *History, Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 80.

two to flung it over his head. This practice was called *tinka torna*.¹⁵² After performing the above mentioned practice, the funeral party returned home. On the way a branch of a *nim* (margosa tree) was plucked and everybody was given a leaf before entering the village, they were supposed to chew it and then spit out as a token that all contamination had been removed.¹⁵³

The period of mourning or *matam* varied from one to thirteen days.¹⁵⁴ All the relatives, male and female wore white clothes. The widow of the deceased removed her ornaments and loosened her hair. The loud lamentations of the women were called *vain*. We do find such references in Punjabi literature as well.

“*khule vaal zananey sarre rovan kheh odaye*”.¹⁵⁵

The beating of breast and thighs was termed as *pittna*. In Punjab, *siapa* or *pittna* was performed by the experienced and aged ladies. According to Sikh tradition no lamentation was raised, nor give expression of grief and did not enter mourning.¹⁵⁶ During mourning period, the deceased's family was not allowed to shave and to wear shoes. No fire was lit in the house but the neighbours and the *biradari* had thoughtfully prepared a simple meal. All the earthen vessels in the house were broken and thrown away. Gaudy dresses were avoided and the women covered their heads with white *dupattas* or shawls as a sign of mourning. Various charitable acts were performed.¹⁵⁷

Among the Muslims, on the third day, the rite of *qul khwani* was performed. Verses of the Quran being recited for the benefit of the deceased soul which was called *khatam-quran*. His clothes were also given to the poor as charity. On this day, food was cooked at home. The sweet dishes and other food items were distributed

¹⁵² *Tinka tor sutio ne pichhe, ghar jayeke yaar piyare*. After breaking the straw it was throw behind and all relatives of Haqiqat Rai returned to the home. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 48; Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 121.

¹⁵³ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 147.

¹⁵⁴ P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters Under Mughals*, 187.

¹⁵⁵ All women loosened their hair and dust was arising as they weep. Damodar, *Punjab Wich Qissa Heer Ranja* (K.S.Kang) Lok Sahit Parkashan, Amritsar, 1983, 264.

¹⁵⁶ W.H. Mcleod, *Prem Sumarag*, 75.

¹⁵⁷ Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 153; A.H. Bingley, *History, Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 80, 153-155.

among the poor.¹⁵⁸ On this day the lawful heir was made to put on a turban by his *pir* or a Sayyid. Clothes and money was also given to him. After the *qul khwani*, the deceased's heirs placed some palm leaves, sweet scented flowers and green leaves of a fruit tree on his grave. This was called *phul-patri*. It was believed that these reduce or alleviate his sufferings. On this day parents-in-law of deceased husband gave his widow some cash, clothes and ornaments which were called *jora randsala* or grab of widowhood.¹⁵⁹

Bone collecting ceremony or *phul chugna* was an important ceremony among the Hindu and the Sikhs. The ceremony was done on the fourth day (*chautha*) after the cremation. Remaining bones were collected and washed with milk water (*lassi*) and deposited into a new earthen pitcher (*kuja*) or a bag of deer skin and thrown into a river preferably in the Ganga.¹⁶⁰

The ceremony of *phul chugna* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was performed by Kanwar Kharak Singh who on 30th June, 1839, along with the Sardars went to the cremation ground. At first he himself picked up the ashes with his own hand and put the same into the vessels of gold. The Sardars also engaged themselves in this business and taking the ashes of the noble Sarkar, the ladies of his seraglio and his maid servants preserved them separately. They put those ashes first in a box made of brocade and put the box before the Granth Sahib. After that Kharak Singh took the box of ashes into his own hand and went to place them under a big canopy.¹⁶¹

The ceremony of *kirya karam* was considered as the last ceremony among the Hindus and the Sikhs held on 13th day. On this day all the relatives friends and kinsmen were invited. On this day Brahman received special gifts of clothes and other articles. The period of mourning finished with this ceremony.¹⁶² On the day of

¹⁵⁸ H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 194; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 304.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁶⁰ *Phul* or bones of Haqiqat Rai was taken and thrown in river Ganga. Agra Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), 48; Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, 103; A.H. Bingley, *History, Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujjars*, 80; Parkash Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 153.

¹⁶¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 4.

¹⁶² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 14; H.A. Rose, *Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*, 162-163.

kirya karam of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, lakhs of rupees, in cash or in kinds were distributed among the Brahmans.¹⁶³

Besides the above mentioned rituals and ceremonies, there were some other ceremonies, which were celebrated at the Lahore Darbar with great enthusiasm and splendour, for instance coronation ceremony and celebration of victory. Coronation ceremony was the most important administrative ceremony. It was celebrated with magnificence. The whole of the capital was profusely decorated. We do not get much information about the coronation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, except a brief reference in Diwan Dina Nath's *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*. There he states that Ranjit Singh held a Darbar in 1801, attended by all his feudatories, officers and Sardars. At this formal gathering he proclaimed the assumption of the title of *Sarkar-i-wala*. He had not associated himself with any title of the Maharaja, he issued the coins in the names of Gurus.¹⁶⁴ In another source, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, we get the information that Sahib Singh Bedi daubed him (Ranjit Singh) with saffron paste and proclaimed him the Maharaja of the Punjab.¹⁶⁵

In 1816, Maharaja Ranjit Singh decided to install Prince Kharak Singh as heir-apparent to the throne of Punjab. A grand Darbar was held at Lahore in which Kharak Singh was proclaimed to be the crown prince. All the Rajas, princes, Sardars and feudatories offered *nazars* in token of allegiance to Kharak Singh.¹⁶⁶ The conventional coronation of Kharak Singh was held in 1839 after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Sohan Lal Suri gives a detailed account of the ceremony as follows:

“On the 18th bhadon, 1896 Sambat (1st September, 1839 A.D) Raja Sahib (Dhian Singh) and the other chieftains, all the three bhai Sahibs (Gobind

¹⁶³ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 351.

¹⁶⁴ Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Kirpal Singh), 14; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 137; S.R. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 53.

¹⁶⁵ F.S. Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, 67; P.S. Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 40-41; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 353; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 47.

¹⁶⁶ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 238; Giani Gian Singh, *Tarikh Raj Khalsa*, 204; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 57; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 121.

Ram, Ram Singh and Gurmukh Singh) presented themselves. The glorious tent and a costly canopy were pitched under the place for throne, which was supported by 40 pillars. Before the rising of the illuminating sun Kharak Singh took his seat in a gold chair and took a sacred bath with water of Ganges and put on white garments beset with diamonds, a big armlet, the Koh-i-noor and the other articles of jewellery. After that he offered a worship of Ganeshji and the nine stars (navgrah puja) and the mark of installation was first put by the prohibits. After that the other Sardars and bhai Barhami and Raja Sahib (Dhian Singh) applied the mark upon the blessed forehead, when bhai Rupa and the three bhai Sahibs, bhai Ram Singh, bhai Gobind Ram and bhai Gurmukh Singh had finished applying the installation mark. After that large sum of money, various things and several gold pitchers were given away to the Brahmans and the bhais on a performance of a samkalap. After that all presented nazars. Rewards were given to the dancing girls, the staff in-charge of floorings, servants and attendants. At the happy moment of enthronement a discharge of topkhana took place''.¹⁶⁷

We do find the information about the coronation ceremony of Sher Singh and Dalip Singh respectively. Sohan Lal Suri gives a picturesque account of Sher Singh's coronation as follows:

"After mutual consultation of all the pandits, astronomers and the astrologers, all of them fixed up the day of basant panchmi as the blessed hour for the purpose, according to the books and the readings of astrology. _ _ _ _ On the day of the basant panchmi (20th January, 1841) Sher Singh took a sacred bath early in the morning according to instructions of Brahmans and after finishing with his worship and distributing of alms and charities, took his blessed seat upon the throne. At first Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Gulab Singh, Raja Suchet Singh, Sandhawalias, Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Sardar Tej Singh Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, Attariwala chieftains,

¹⁶⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 45; Kavi Gwal, Vijay Vinod, Shamsheer Singh (ed.), 200.

*Fakir Aziz-ud-din, Khalifa Nuruddin, the rest of the staff, the pillars of the great kingdom and the counsellors of the great court presented one by one in their names swift-footed horses with gold necklace and harnesses, gold ducats and several other wonderful and good things to the Shahzada. After that daftaries, munshis, vakils and commandants of the platoons _ _ _ _ _ and other office bearers secured over lasting facility by presenting nazars. _ _ _ _ _ As soon as Sher Singh finished with taking nazars he attended to the listening of music and dance of the dancing girls. _ _ _ _ _ All the servants and the staff of the state were granted rewards befitting the position and rank of everyone”.*¹⁶⁸

Similarly the day of coronation of Dalip Singh was fixed by the *pandits* of Lahore on the 22nd *magh* (2 February, 1844 A.D). After worshiping, Sodhi Sahib, Bedi Sahib after that *bhai* Ram Singh and *bhai* Gobind Ram fixed the installation mark of the Rajaship upon his forehead. After that chieftains and others presented *nazars*.¹⁶⁹

Conquest of a territory and victory in battle was the one of the most joyous events at the Lahore Darbar. Whenever, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was victorious in any campaign large scale celebrations were held. At the news of every victory, a round of festivities would start. In 1799, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh made his triumphant entry into Lahore, guns fired the royal salute. Trumpets of happiness were blown and voices of felicitation were raised from all sides.¹⁷⁰ The leading citizens of Lahore presented *nazars* and received rich *khillats* from their new ruler. War booty was distributed among the poor and the needy.¹⁷¹

The victory of Amritsar in 1805, added more laurels to the fame of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This event was celebrated with great pomp and show. Sohan Lal Suri's description of the celebrations of the conquest is as follow:

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 160; Kavi Gwal, *Vijay Vinod*, Shamsher Singh (ed.), 200.

¹⁶⁹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar IV, 304.

¹⁷⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 37; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 40.

¹⁷¹ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 137; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 352.

*“The exalted Sarkar entered the fort and took five cannons and some swivels. He held a public assembly at the house of the Bhangis at the back of the fort. Then he went to visit the Harmandir Sahib and thereby derived eternal esteem. He bestowed upon the people of the city variety of favours according to rank and station”.*¹⁷²

The victories of Qasur in 1806 and Kangra in 1809 were celebrated with great grandeur. Illuminations were held at Amritsar and Lahore.¹⁷³ The prominent persons who rendered good services in the victory of Qasur were granted deserving *jagirs* in the vicinity of Qasur. They were also honoured with the grants of glittering *khillats*. Large sums of money in cash or kinds were sent to Harmandir Sahib.¹⁷⁴

The news of fall of the Multan in 1818 was brought to Lahore by a fast messenger (*chobdar*) of Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. The harbinger was awarded with a pair of gold bangles, one scarf and rupees 500 in cash and on the news being confirmed through official sources, rupees 600 were conferred up on Sahib Singh, head of the *harkaras*.¹⁷⁵ Sohan Lal Suri gives a detailed account of celebration as follow:

*“The Maharaja rode on a huge elephant went to the fort of Lahore, enroute Golden mosque, Taksali gate, Thathiar bazaar, Paper mandi and Lahore mandi, showering gold all along and filling the aprons of the expectant, needy and the poor. Most of the ahlakars secured everlasting felicity by offering nazarana on the occasion of the conquest of the fort of Multan. Dancing girls and other needy persons came to congratulate the Maharaja and the apron of their desire was filled with cash. And illumination of the city took place with great glory.”*¹⁷⁶

Sardars who had participated in this campaign were bestowed with gifts, titles and *jagirs*. Misr Dewan Chand, the conqueror of Multan was awarded the title

¹⁷² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 48; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 154-155; S.M. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 60.

¹⁷³ S.R. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 58, 101; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 367.

¹⁷⁴ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 55; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 171.

¹⁷⁵ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 252; S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 412-413; Gulcharan Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh Conquest of Multan*, Punjab Past and Present, Vol. XIX, 1985, 67-80.

¹⁷⁶ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 253; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 13.

of *Zafar-Jang-Bahadur* (the victorious of battle) and was also granted a *jagir* with a valuable robe of honour.¹⁷⁷ A few pairs of gold bangles and some scarfs and shawls were sent to Misr Dewan Chand for their distribution among those who showed boldness and excelled others in the field of battle.¹⁷⁸ The cities of Lahore and Amritsar were illuminated for a week. Royal orders were issued to the citizens of these cities to illuminate their houses. Grateful offerings were made to holy shrines of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.¹⁷⁹

The victory of Multan gave the Maharaja tremendous boost to conquer Kashmir.¹⁸⁰ The news of capturing the Kashmir, in 1819 gave him “thousand fold pleasure”, and joy. Sohan Lal Suri describes the pleasure in following manner:

*On this blessed news Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered the firing of guns with great éclat. Riding on a huge elephant he went about scattering gold and silver coins and other pieces of silver all over the victorious troops. After that he got the pleasure of paying obeisance to the Granth Sahib and went back to his residence. He set up a great assembly for merry-making and enjoyment in the form of happy festival or celebration. The moon-faced beauties with bewitching voices sang and received very excessive and abundant rewards, and the aprons of all the honest and nearest attendants filled with their objects of ambitions”.*¹⁸¹

The Maharaja was so pleased with the conquest of Kashmir that he awarded Misr Diwan Chand the title of *Fateh-o-Nursat Nasib* and also granted a *jagir* of 50,000 rupees and a valuable robe of honour.¹⁸² The Maharaja also appointed Diwan

¹⁷⁷ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 253; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 126; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 72; Gulcharan Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh Conquest of Multan*, 78.

¹⁷⁸ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 253.

¹⁷⁹ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 251; G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, 13; Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, III.

¹⁸⁰ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 303; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 261; P.S. Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 114.

¹⁸¹ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 303.

¹⁸² Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 317, 318; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 72.

Customs, Rites and Ceremonies

Moti Ram as a *nazim*.¹⁸³ He visited Harmandir Sahib for thanks giving and made large offerings in cash and gold. He offered Rs. 1000 at Harmandir Sahib and Akal *bunga* each. As usual, cities of Amritsar and Lahore were illuminated for many days.¹⁸⁴

The return of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Lahore, after victory of Peshawar, was an occasion of great rejoicing. He visited Harmandir Sahib and paid Rs. 25,000 as *ardas*. He showered gold and silver coins on the large concourse of people who had gathered in the streets to celebrate the victory of Peshawar. He sent large sums of money to the religious places of Hindus and Muslims.¹⁸⁵

Thus we can say that human life was woven around the various customs, rites and ceremonies. These were relevant features of the society. Each event of life had some peculiar rites and rituals which were observed with happiness and sorrow. Numbers of people were gathered to observe them. Most of the ceremonies were common among the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Birth of a child was considered as a most auspicious event in the family which was elaborated with numbers of ceremonies and customs. Among the Hindus, ceremonies started even before the birth of a child called *reetan*. Hindus considered woman impure after delivery and remains confined to the house for first ten days or more as the period is called *sutak*. The duration of *sutak* varied among different castes. Religious books were consulted for the naming ceremony of the male child. *Janeo* among Hindus and *sunnat* among Muslims symbolized their separate identities.

In weddings *Bichola* or *lagi* like Brahmans, barbars (*nais*) and the bards (*dums* or *bhats*) played a significant role. Months like *magh*, *phagun*, *baisakh*, *jeth* and *asarh* were considered lucky for marriages. But Spring was considered the most favourable season for marriage. Numbers of rituals were observed during wedding. Rituals like *til-khelna* and *dewar godi mein baithana* were signified the importance

¹⁸³ Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Kirpal Singh), 114; Radha Sharma, *The Lahore Darbar*, 72; Debi Parsad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab* (tr. Harminder Singh and ed. Fauja Singh), 30.

¹⁸⁴ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, 305; S.R. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 157; Madanjit Kaur, *The Golden Temple Past and Present*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1983, 53.

¹⁸⁵ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (ed. Jit Singh Sital), 291; S.R. Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 152.

male child in society. From the evidences on funeral rites like *gow-daan*, *chuli-chhadna*, *diva-vatti*, *pind daan karna*, *adhmarg*, *tinka torna* and *kapal kirya* one can see the importance of the next world.

Besides the customs, rites and ceremonies related to life cycle, there were other occasions which were celebrated by the ruling class. Victory of new area was occasion of celebration at a large scale. Religious places were visited, illuminations were ordered and charities distributed among the poor and needy. Heroes of the victory were given handsome rewards. Similarly coronation of a new ruler was most important administrative ceremony. A grand Darbar was held at Lahore, in which all the Rajas, princes, Sardars and feudatories offered *nazars* in token of allegiance to the new Maharaja. We get a reflection of the celebrations, rites, rituals and ceremonies the literature of the period as well.

CHAPTER - VII

LITERATURE

Literature is a vital record of what writers have seen in life, what they have thought and observed. Love and war the basic themes of literary tradition from many centuries remained the two major themes from the middle of eighteenth century to the mid of the nineteenth century. Some new themes such as *jhagra* and *janj* were added to Punjabi literature in the eighteenth century. The treatment of love and war by the creative writers of this period enable us to appreciate the integrative role of this literature.

Turning to the period from 1750 to 1850 we notice first that the volume of Punjabi literature increased, particularly the secular literature considerably. The number of known poets exceeded a score and the total of their works was three or four times more. The writers of eighteenth century came from all parts of the Punjab. It must be emphasized, however, that nearly four fifth of the writers came from the core area in the dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The city of Lahore and its adjoining areas, produced poets like Shah Hussain, Fazal Shah, Lakh Shah, Jafar Beg, Sawan Yar and many more. Gujranwala was the native place of Waris Shah. Agra Sethi, Ram Dial and Dyal Singh had close affiliations with Sialkot. Shah Muhammad belonged to Wadala. Hashim Shah and Sahai Singh belonged to the district of Amritsar.¹

The writers belonged to all the three communities- Sikh, Muslim and Hindu of the Punjab. At least one third of these writers were Muslims. Because the Sikhs in Punjab had struggled hard for existence first and then for establishing their own rule. The Hindus had lacked interest in literary works because they were engaged in other occupations like finance, administration and military. So the Muslim population of the

¹ Maula Bakhsh Kushta, *Punjab de Hire*, 28,34,42,58,59,65,66,64,132; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society And Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 32,33.

countryside was all along holding on to their routine life, their cultural pursuits and literary activities.²

Literature was created in the society and for the society. And if it was fabricated in common language then it would become more popular among the masses. The writers of this century were conscious about the distinctive entity of Punjabi as a medium of communication for the common people. The tradition of Punjabi literature was growing with the conscious efforts of Punjabi writers. Ahmad Yar and Waris Shah considered themselves as Punjabi poets.³ They produced their works in the common language which was Punjabi.

*aam lokan vaste qissa akhan saad,
aam lokan vaste hai Punjabi khub.*⁴

(I address to the common people who understand Punjabi well).

Though the Persian being court language of Lahore Darbar,⁵ even then daily business was conducted in Punjabi for the obvious reason that it was only language which was better understood by newly emerged ruling class who came from agricultural background.

Although there is no evidence of direct patronization of literature, it is apparent that the emergence of the Punjab as sovereign state did have some impact on consolidating and unifying the existing literary trends.⁶ Enough of literature was written in the hope of reward from the royalty and the ruling class. But some writers like Waris Shah and Hashim Shah showed their contempt for new rulers. Hashim Shah did not write even a single work under the inspiration of the Sikh rulers. Those who eulogized the Sikh rulers received due recognition.⁷ Ahmad Yar, contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, received a village as *jagir* for his work *Hatim Tai*. Sawan

² J.S. Grewal, *Punjabi Literature (1750-1850)* (ed.) Dharam Singh, *Sikhism and Secularism*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994, 155.

³ Grewal, *Punjabi Literature (1750-1850)* (ed.) Dharam Singh, 159.

⁴ Hamid Shah, *Jang Panghambar* (ed.) Sukha Singh, Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 1928, 4; Attar Singh, *Political Change And Punjabi Literature in Nineteenth Century*, (ed.) Indu Banga, *Five Punjabi Century*, 541.

⁵ Hamid Shah, *Jang Panghambar* (ed.) Sukha Singh, 541.

⁶ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 413.

⁷ *Ibid*, 414.

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Yar praised the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his *Si-harfi Sarkar Ki*, emphasizing the Maharaja's sagacity, power, justice and patronage. Qadir Yar received a well (*khuh*) in reward for narrating the story of *Puran Bhagat*.⁸

Literature of this period may be classified according to its subjects as secular, heroic, romantic, religious and historical. In nineteenth century the largest bulk of literature was written in verse, and the first striking feature was its volume. Literary traditions or genres not only represented different phases or periods of history but also contained valuable evidences for the social, economic and cultural life of the people.

The eighteenth century was period of political turmoil due to the triangular contest between Mughals, Afghans and the Sikhs for the sovereignty of the Punjab. This situation provided a number of themes of heroic tradition like *varan*, *jangname* and *si-harfian*. Heroic poetry constituted a very significant portion of the Punjabi literature. It was written on current historical situation. The subject of heroic poetry did not go far back into the past. A short span of time between an event and the composition of the ballad was made for the broad outlines of the battle. The ballad writers usually handled the facts of history and they could alter the facts on purpose to make the heroic figures shine in a nobler light. In heroic poetry, the deeds of a hero when translated into heroic songs, reflected the entire strength of his clan for whom he had become an object of pride and admiration. In its infancy the heroic ideal of the warrior was always to be strong and courageous, to conquer all opponents, to win fame for the posterity to celebrate.⁹

From the ballads dealing with the violent society it becomes obvious that the people in those days were fascinated by martial glory. It enhanced the value of the ideal at the cost of lives. Martial contrast of the hero and deserter is significant from their standpoint. None of the poets like Hakam Singh Darvesh, Najabat, Qadir Yar, Ram Dial, Sahai Singh, Shah Muhammad and Matak received any royal patronage. Their allegiance to the ideals of their own people is evident from numerous references

⁸ Qadir Yar, *Qissa Puran Bhagat*, Amrit Pustak Bhandar, Amritsar 24., Sawan Yar, *Si-harfi Sarkar ki* (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Maharaja*, Kalam Mandir Lower Maal, Patiala, 1978, 67-68., Ahmad Yar, *Hatim Tai* (ed.) Sant Singh Sekhon, *Parsidh Punjabi kavi*, 175-176.

⁹ Harbans Singh, *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol IV, 406; Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 122.

in their works. The junction of heroic literature was clearly political. They also provided some evidences on social and cultural life of the people.

In heroic literature of Punjab, *var*, a verse form in Punjabi, popular in folklore as well as in refined poetry, had important place. In the old bardic tradition of the Punjab, *var* meant the poem itself with its typical theme as also the form in which it was cast. The earliest *vars* were ballads of battles, dynastic feuds, issues of honour fought at the point of sword and of romantic love. The Sikh Gurus employed this form for spiritual theme.¹⁰ Bhai Gurdas raised the *var* literature to the highest pedestal in the interpretation of Sikh historical and religious tradition in the exposition of the transcendental and the mundane in ballads of extreme elegance and sublimity. The content of *var* subsequently changed from spiritual to heroic. The *vars* of Sikh martyrs and heroes enjoyed much vogue and were sung with fervour at Sikh gatherings. The *vars* were sung by the bards and *dhadi* before the village audiences, panegyricizing the gallantry of folk heroes and warriors. *Vars* were also sung for the warriors before they march into the battlefield.¹¹ During late eighteenth century the *var* or ballad began to be employed in popular throughout the Punjab on account of its common theme, rhythmic medium, emotional appeal and sectional interest.

Among the eighteenth century ballads in Punjab, *Var Nadir Shah*, written by Najabat, is significant. Najabat belonged to Shahpur district in the western Punjab. He recalled the brief history of the Court of Delhi. He referred to the factional intrigues in the court of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah who was ridiculed and humiliated by the Irani counterparts in the royal court; Nizam-ul-Mulk conspired with Nadir Shah. Najabat showed his contempt for treason. Najabat mentioned Nadir Shah's invasion in detail. He showed his sympathies for the Punjabi people who became victims against ruthless atrocities of the invading army. Throughout the ballad,

¹⁰ Harbans Singh, *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol IV, 406.

¹¹ Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan* (ed.), 1; J.S. Grewal, *Celebrating Libration: The Vars of 'Gurdas*, *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2002, 15-23.

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however, Najabat reserved his sympathies for the Irani nobles and soldiers whose loyalty towards their master was always held high by him.¹²

Though *Var Nadir Shah* deals with invasion of Nadir Shah on Punjab, it also throws some light on society of the Punjab with special reference to position of Brahmans in social structure.¹³ He gave some indications about the diet and dress of the *fakir*.¹⁴ Besides chess, fishing, pigeons fighting and acrobats, festivals like *diwali*, *lohri*, *baisakhi* and *id* were main source of entertainment.¹⁵

Var Haqiqat Rai by Agra Sethi, a Khatri poet, written in 1784, represented the atrocity of the rulers on the ruled. The historical landscape of Haqiqat Rai's story is situated in the context of Mughal persecution of the Sikhs during the eighteenth century. It was a period in which the Mughal authorities sought to ensure their ascendancy and the Sikhs were trying to establish themselves in the unfavourable conditions of the time. *Var Haqiqat Rai* depicted an account of the heroic martyrdom of a young Hindu boy of Sialkot, who preferred death at the hands of the Mughals instead of being converted to Islam. Haqiqat Rai's sacrifice placed him at par with other martyrs of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ The *var* signifies the historical as well as socio-cultural aspects. It gives valuable information about the existing rites and ceremonies observed on various stages of life like birth, marriage and death.

Agra Sethi in his *var* mentioned the importance of a male child in the patriarchal society by giving number of celebrations and ceremonies like *dhaman* and *namkaran* associated with male child alone.¹⁷ He gave detailed description of wedding ceremonies like *shagan*, *saha sudana*, *watna* or *maian pauna*, *tel-charauna*, *ghari-ghorli*, *chappan bhannana*, *gana* and *kaur dhoti da shagan*.¹⁸ Like other rituals and ceremonies, a set of ceremonies executed after death like *vain*, *tinka torna* and *phul chugna* were also narrated in this *var*.¹⁹ This piece of literature is a good

¹² Najabat, *Var Nadir Shah*, Piara Singh Padam, *Punjab Dian Varan*, 536-575.

¹³ Najabat, *Var Nadir Shah* (ed.) Kulwant Singh, Ravi Sahit Parkashan, 1988, 95.

¹⁴ *Ibid*; 15, 100.

¹⁵ *Ibid*; 55-56.

¹⁶ Agar Sethi, *Var Haqiqat Rai* (ed. Ganda Singh), *Punjab Dian Varan*, 10, 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid*; 15, 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid*; 19, 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid*; 48.

commentary on the rites and rituals of the people of the Punjab during the period of its writing.

Pir Muhammad's *Chatthian di Var* is of historical significance. It provides information about the rise of Sukarchakia chiefs. Pir Muhammad gives a detailed account of the battles fought between the Chattha chiefs of Rasul Nagar and Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. Pir Muhammad, a resident of Nunawali, lived by the places of battle. He composed this ballad during the early nineteenth century and was richly rewarded by the Chattha chiefs.²⁰

In the beginning of *var*, Pir Muhammad highlighted the strength and warlike disposition of first Chattha chief. The rise of Sardar Charat Singh Sukarchakia was narrated in *var*. After Charat Singh's death, his son Mahan Singh increased his military strength and led expeditions into Jammu and Lun Miani. He besieged the fortress of Sayyid Nagar with the help of local Bhalla Khattris. The Chattha chief resorted to loot and plunder in the area. Mahan Singh attacked his adversary at Manchar but only to retreat with heavy losses. The fortress of Manchar was besieged for the second time by the combined forces of Mahan Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi. Finding himself overpowered Ghulam Muhammad sued for peace.²¹

Throughout the *var*, Pir Muhammad's emphasis is on the treacherous disposition of the Sikh chief. He projected Singhs and Chatthas as heroic adversaries and the Bhalla Khattris as local traitors.²² It indicates also of the communal feelings of the population of the core region in the early nineteenth century. With the emergence of Jat Sikhs as a new ruling class from 1760 onward, feelings of insecurity and frustration increased among some sections of Muslims on account of their lost glory and power. Pir Muhammad in his *var* also throws light on social life of the Punjab. During those days, astrologers were consulted for all occasions. Even for the

²⁰ Pir Muhammad, *Chatthia Di Var*, (ed.)Piara Singh Padam, *Punjab Dian Varan*, 576-603; B.S.G human, *Chatthia Di Var*, (ed.), Punjabi Writers Co. Society, Ludhiana, 1987,2-34; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Punjabi Heroic Poetry*, 177.

²¹ Pir Muhammad, *Chatthia Di Var*, (ed.)Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1971, 60.

²² *Ibid* .,64.

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destruction of Chattha chiefs, Sikhs consulted astrologers. Some indications of dresses and food items like sugar, ghee and *kheer* were also found in *var*.²³

Sahai Singh compiled *Var Hari Singh Nalwa* between 1833 and 1840. He belonged to Majha region. Though the aim of the poet seems to have been to eulogize his hero, Hari Singh, he also throws light on the occupation of Peshawar and erection of the Jamrud fortress. He is silent on the death of Hari Singh. The *Var Hari Singh Nalwa* is rich in information on the character of the Sardar. It also gives information on various social cultural aspects as well. Sahai Singh in his *var* gave information about male's head jewellery like *kalgi* and *zigha*.²⁴ According to him Brahmans or *pandits* had occupied influential status in the society. They were consulted on all occasions. It was customary in Punjab to distribute *gur* (refined sugar) and pour mustard oil on the threshold after getting good news.²⁵

In the heroic literature of the period, *jangnama* formed prominent place. It represented a genre of Punjabi poetry meant to narrate battles. Around 1797, Dial Singh wrote *Fateh Nama*, narrating a brief encounter between Sahib Singh Bhangi and Ahmad Khan Shahanchi Bashi, a general of Zaman Shah. Dial Singh's native place was Ghalotian, a village near Daska situated between Sialkot and Gujranwala. He had reverential attitude towards the Bhangi chiefs, Gujjar Singh and his son Sahib Singh. The title *Fateh Nama* itself indicates the glorified victory of the Sikhs over the Afghans.²⁶

Ram Dial Anand, a Khatri, wrote *Janganama Sardar Hari Singh* in 1840. He was resident of Nawan Shehar. *Jangnama* was written in bait metre. It was primarily highlighted the heroic actions of Sardar Hari Singh in the battle of Jamrud in 1837. Besides narrating the battle, Ram Dial also throw light on rituals observed before and after death.²⁷ Similarly Qadir Yar, a Muslim Jat of Sandhu subcaste, belonged to

²³ *Ibid*; 66,72.

²⁴ Sahai Singh, *Var Hari Singh Nalwa*, (ed.)Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*, 108.

²⁵ *Ibid*; 110.

²⁶ Dial Singh, *Fateh Nama*(ed. Ganda Singh), *Punjab Dian Varan*, 50-53.

²⁷ Ram Dial Anand, *Jandnama Sardar Hari Singh*, (ed. Ganda Singh), *Punjab Dian Varan*, 76, 77, 85.

Machhike village of Shikhupura.²⁸ In his *var*, *Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa* discussed some rituals like *diva vatti* and *gaodan*, related to death.²⁹

Kahan Singh Banganwala who belonged to Banga in the district of Jalandhar wrote *Jangnama Lahore* in 1846. He wrote this work at the behest of Mr. Vansittart, Deputy Commissioner, Jalandhar. So his defense of the British stems out of the patronage by the British. Most probably, he served in Lahore during the hey-day of Sardar Jawahar Singh (brother of Maharani Jindan).³⁰ The significance of *Jangnama* very much lied in the fact that Kahan Singh provided maximum number of names of the soldiers who lost their lives in first Anglo Sikh war. He blamed Maharani Jindan and treacherous Raja Tej Singh and Lal Singh for the defeat.³¹

The civil war in the Lahore Darbar that culminated at the deaths of the Sandhawalia Sardars and rise of Raja Hira Singh was depicted in another *Jangnama*, *Lahore di Khanajangi*, by a Dhadi in 1843. It may be considered the first historical literary creation which reflects on the ensuing decline of the Lahore Kingdom.³²

Jangnama Singhan Wa Firangian Da, by Shah Muhammad, occupied prominent place in heroic literature of the Punjab. He was a resident of Wadala Viran in the district of Amritsar. He had good relations with Mian Din Muhammad, a *munshi* of Maharaja Sher Singh. The forefathers of the poet were holding the office of *qazis* and *kardars* under the Mughals. He belonged to the Quresh tribe.³³ Shah Muhammad was first among the Punjabi poets who composed *jangnama* on the first Anglo Sikh war. It was composed between 1846 and 1848 that was before the commencement of second Anglo Sikh war. Shah Muhammad's *jangnama* was also known as *Var Shah Muhammad*, *Qissa Shah Muhammad*, *Baintan Shah Muhammad*

²⁸ Qadir Yar, *Var Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa*, 93.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁰ Kahan Singh Banganwala, *Jangnama Lahore* (ed.)Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*,268; Kirpal Singh Kassel, Parminder Singh, Gobind Singh, *Punjabi Sahit di Utpati te Vikas*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1982, 57, 365.

³¹ *Ibid*, 268.

³² Shamsher Singh, *Punjabi Varan te Jangname*,256-57; Harminder Kaur, *Contemporary Heroic Poetry*, 19.

³³ Pritam Saini, *Var Shah Muhammad*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludiana, 1980, 14, 27.

Kian and Angrezan te Singhan di Pahili Larai.³⁴ Besides presenting realistic account of the battles, Shah Muhammad praised fifty year rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³⁵ Shah Muhammad in his *jangnana* did not show contempt for the treacherous general like Lal Singh and Tej Singh. He throws all responsibility of Anglo Sikh war on the shoulders of Maharani Jindan.³⁶

In the words of Shah Muhammad, Hindus and Muslims of the Punjab were co-existing happily prior to the British. He showed his hate towards British by calling them *teesri jaat*.³⁷ The phrase *teesri jaat* used for the British also signifies that Sikhs in Punjab were not differentiated from the Hindus. In the context of the Maharani Jindan's role played in Lahore Darbar, Shah Muhammad showed his scorn for women. He treated Maharani Jindan as a treacherous woman. He in his *jangnama* gave examples how the women had been the source of wars and treachery right from the ancient times.

“hunde aaye ne ranna de dhuron kaare,
Lanka wich tan Rawan duhaye ditta,
Kauravn Pandavan naal kee bhala keeta,
thahran khuhiyan katak mukaye ditta,
Raje Bhoj de muh lagam ditti,
maar addian hosh bhulaye ditti”.³⁸

Another *jangnama* deals with first Anglo-Sikh war was *Jangnama Singhan te Firangian Da* written in 1846 by Matak. The real importance of his work lies in the fact that unlike Shah Muhammad he had openly denounced the treacherous disposition of Tej Singh and Lal Singh. He had used derogatory words for the traitors of the Lahore Darbar.

‘Lallu di lali gai, Tejju da giya tej,
rann wich pith dekhayke, modha aaye pher”.³⁹

³⁴ Shah Muhammad, *Jangnama Shah Muhammad Arthat Angrezan te Singhan di Pehli Larai* (ed.) Kirpal Singh Kassel, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, 64.

³⁵ Shah Muhammad, *Jangnama Shah Muhammad* (ed. Ganda Singh), *Punjab Dian Varan*, 125.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 150.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 125.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 150, 154.

In his words they had earned ill repute among the native people.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Matak had eulogized the valour shown by Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala.⁴¹

During this period another genre in heroic poetry called *Si-harfi* (an explicatory poem written on the basis of 30 letters of Persian language)⁴² became very popular among the poets of the Punjab. In 1830's Hakam Singh Darvesh wrote *Si-harfi Guru Khalsa Shah Ki* or *Guru Gobind Singh Ji Ke Khalsa Shah Kian Baintan*. Hakam Singh was a close contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The poet himself was a soldier in the Khalsa army. He was working under the command of Sardar Gulab Singh Pohuwandia.⁴³ Hakam Singh was a Jat Sikh of Grewal subcaste and belonged to Raipur, a village to the south of Ludhiana.⁴⁴ Hakam Singh in *si-harfi* praised Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a humble servant of the Khalsa.⁴⁵ He emphasized the achievements of the Khalsa.⁴⁶ Probably Hakam Singh had taken part in the expeditions of Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar. He appeared to have been a fast rider. In 1818, he was the first to communicated the news of the final victory of Multan to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁴⁷

Sawan Yar a Muslim poet wrote *Si-harfi Sarkar Ki* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. From his description he seems to be a resident of the region between Lahore and Gujranwala. Sawan Yar gave account of the benevolence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his *si-harfi*. Maharaja's love affair with Moran, a Muslim concubine, is a special feature of his *si-harfi*. Sawan Yar presented Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a great lover.⁴⁸ Moran's grief and sadness for the Maharaja was beautifully

³⁹ Matak, *Jang Singhan te Firangian Da* (ed.), Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, 204.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 204.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 203.

⁴² Kahan Singh Nabha, *Encyclopaedia of the Sikh Literature*, Vol. I, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University Patiala, 2006, 480.

⁴³ Hakam Singh Darvesh, *Si-harfi Guru Khalsa Shah Ki* (ed.) Piara Singh, *Punjabi Maharaja*,

⁴⁴ Kalam Mandir Lower Madal, Patiala, 19787, 57; Grewal, *Punjabi Literature*, 161.

⁴⁵ Hakam Singh, *Si-harfi Guru Kahlsla Shah Ki*, 64.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 62.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 62.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 57.

⁴⁹ Sawan Yar, *Si-harif Sarkar ki*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Maharaja*, 74.

illustrated by him.⁴⁹ In his words their love became the part of folk. Their love tales were sung by girls while *trinjan*.⁵⁰ He uses the word *kanjri* for her.⁵¹

Jafar Beg, another contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh wrote *Si-harfi Sarkar Ki* in 1840. As its name reflected that this *si-harfi* was written to eulogize the Maharaja but its greater portion is exclusively devoted to rituals performed during death. Rituals like *chuli chhadna*, *diva mansana* and *phul chugna* were discussed by him.⁵² Custom of *sati* was also highlighted in *si-harfi*.⁵³

Nihal Singh wrote *Baintan Sher Singh Kian* probably before 21 December, 1844, when Raja Hira` Singh and Pandit Jalla fled from Lahore. It was written in *si-harfi*. Nihal Singh wrote to denounce the murderers who proved traitors to the Maharaja.⁵⁴ Internal evidences suggested that Nihal Singh responded immediately to the bloodshed in the Lahore Darbar. He highlighted the facts pertaining to factional conspiracies and bloodshed at the Lahore Darbar. He commented upon the major political events such as murder of Maharaja Sher Singh and his son Partap Singh, Raja Dhian Singh and the Sandhawalia Sardars. He showed sympathy neither with Maharaja Sher Singh nor with the Sandhawalia Sardars. Importance of Nihal Singh's work lies in the fact that he mentions the names of platoons, regiments and Sardars who participated in the civil war.⁵⁵ Nihal Singh in *Baintan Sher Singh Kian* described the ceremony of coronation of Dalip Singh as Maharaja.⁵⁶

Late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was the age of Punjabi romantic poetry. Romantic literature was written in poetry as well as in qissas. Much of the secular *qissa* literature of this period related to the tales of love. Various versions of longer ballads of love and romance based on indigenous and foreign legends were composed during this period. Two distinct trends were visible in the compositional

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 74.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 76.

⁵¹ *Ibid*.

⁵² Jafar Beg, *Si-harifi Sarkar ki*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Maharaja*, 86-88.

⁵³ *Ibid*; 88.

⁵⁴ Grewal, *Punjabi Literature*, 162.

⁵⁵ Nihal Singh, *Baintan Sher Singh Kian* (ed.) Ganda Singh, *Punjab Dian Varan*, 152; Harminder Kaur Sohal, *Contemporary Heroic Poetry*, 19.

⁵⁶ Nihal Singh, *Baintan Sher Singh Kian*, 111.

process of the Punjabi *qissas*. There were love stories drawn from indigenous and ancient Indian stocks, and also there were stories borrowed from Persian-Arabic cultural heritage of the Muslims.⁵⁷ Until the beginning of the nineteenth century only a few love tales from Persian-Arabic origin were composed in Punjabi. Towards the beginning of this century, greater emphasis was given to *qissas*. There were however a greater zeal for the fanciful fairy tales of love of princes and princesses full of adventures among the common audience.⁵⁸

During this period a number of *qissas* were produced on the themes like *Puran Bhagat*, *Kamrup* and *Raj Bibi*. *Hatim Tai*, *Yusuf Zulaikhan*, *Laila Majnu*, *Saif-ul-Muluk* and *Shah Behram* were the themes borrowed from Arabic. Several poets wrote *qissas* on Punjabi love stories like *Sohni Mahiwal*, *Sassi Punnu*, *Mirza Sahiba* and *Heer Ranjha*. Among them *qissa* of *Heer Ranjha* was the most popular love tale of the Punjab.⁵⁹

Punjabi *qissakars* while presenting love stories also throw light on existing social and cultural values of that area. Waris Shah, a renowned Punjabi poet, in his *qissa*, *Heer Waris* depicts life of Punjab very beautifully. He introduces himself as a Muslim who belongs to Sayyid caste. On the basis of his own evidence we find him to be an inhabitant of Jandiala Sher Khan, a village situated in district Shaikhupura. Though no clue is available regarding the date of his birth, it is assumed from the internal evidence that he was born at least before 1780.⁶⁰ Waris Shah is well honoured in Punjabi literature. It dealt with love story of Heer and Ranjha, Jats of Takht Hazara, Jhang and the Rangpur.⁶¹

Waris Shah is not appreciative of the political changes of late eighteenth century. He was a Sayyid who identified himself with the *ashraf* or the elite of the society. With the decline of the Mughal rule they were no longer associated with the

⁵⁷ Attar Singh, *Political Change and Punjabi Literature in the Nineteenth century* (ed.) Indu Banga, *Five Punjabi Centuries*, 541; Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 59.

⁵⁸ Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 59-60.

⁵⁹ Grewal, *Punjabi Literature*, 156.

⁶⁰ Kirpal Singh Kassel, Parminder Singh, Gobind Singh, *Punjabi Sahit di Utpati te Vikas*, 301-307.

⁶¹ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris* (ed.) Shamsher Singh Ashok, Punjab language Department, Patiala, 1976, 136, 152, 192.

ruling class and had lost the social influence. He considered the rulers as upstarts, having risen to power from low social position (*kamins*). Waris Shah was conscious about caste system. In his *qissa* he distinguishes the identity of upper and lower classes on the basis of their castes.⁶² Social evils like female infanticide and *purda* have also been narrated by him.⁶³ He criticized *purda* system and gives a number of methods which were in common use for female infanticide in Punjab.⁶⁴ Waris Shah in his *qissa* tells us that *qazis* were no longer respected by masses because of their corrupt nature.⁶⁵

Waris Shah represents the patriarchal attitude of the society and criticizes the female. Women for him were the root of all evils.⁶⁶ His detailed references of sweetmeats, food items, dresses and ornaments are, however, very fascinating. His description about wedding rituals performed in Punjab is remarkable.

Muqbal another *qissakar* of mid eighteenth century wrote *Qissa Heer Ranjha*. There is no clue about the date and place of his birth. It is only assumed from the language and dialect used by him that he belonged to the region between Lahore and Gujranwala.⁶⁷ Muqbal in his *qissa* has portrayed the contemporary society. His description about marriage rituals, dresses and ornaments is unique from its details.⁶⁸ According to him, professional entertainers like *dhadis*, *dums* and *bhats* played a significant role in the society.⁶⁹

Janjs are also famous genre of Punjabi folk literature. Formally the genre emerged from a marriage ritual *janj bannhana* and *janj chhudauna* or locking and unlocking the bridal party. It has literal implications for the rural folk. From the subject matter of these *janjs*, one can prepare a list of ornaments, dresses, food articles and many other

⁶² J.S. Grewal, *Punjabi Literature*, 156.

⁶³ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, 31; Sarwan Singh, *Qissa Kav Vich Samaj te Sabhiachar*, Ravi Sahit Parkashan, Amritsar, 1981, 94.

⁶⁴ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, 33; Sarwan Singh, *Qissa Kav Vich Samaj te Sabhiachar*, 126.

⁶⁵ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, 67; Sarwan Singh, *Qissa Kav Vich Samaj te Sabhiachar*, 156-167.

⁶⁶ Waris Shah, *Heer Waris*, 17, 119;

⁶⁷ Muqbal, *Jangnama Imam Husan Husain* (ed.) Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Muqbal*, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1961, 157.

⁶⁸ Muqbal, *Qissa Heer Ranjha*, 44, 20, Tarlochan Singh Randhawa, *Punjabi Sabhiachar Ate Heer Kaav Parampara*, Waris Shah Foundation, Amritsar, 1994, 58.

⁶⁹ Muqbal, *Qissa Hir Ranjha*, 60.

things. *Janj* or *barat* was locked by a clever lady of village when the *baratis* could start their meals by uttering a few verses denoting that the guests were not supposed to touch the food until anyone from amongst them responded legitimately. It became a matter of convention for the bridal parties to bring along with them an expert who could solve the poetic riddle and thereby liberate the locked bridal party or *janj*.⁷⁰ To librate the *janj*, poet Bhagi is believed to have written his *janj* in the late sixteenth century through his *qissa Dulo Krishan Viah*.⁷¹

Around 1800 Dyal Singh wrote *qissa Janj Bhai Dyal Singh*. In his *janj*, he gives us a detailed list of persons who gathered in *barat* or *janj*,⁷² and also of the food items, sweetmeats and vegetables which were prepared at weddings. An idea of women's ornaments and dresses can also be gathered.

“*trerh tere da lehanga banna, lak tere de suthan banna,*
hatthan teryan diyan unghlan banna, mundaran challe payeke,
gal tere di jugni banu, wich tweet rakhiyke,
nakk tere di besar bannu , kariya te panjeban”.⁷³

Jhagra forms another important part of the Punjabi folk literature. These are valuable documents reflecting on the social relations among the communities and castes. Literally speaking, *jhagras* represented a formal contention between two stereotyped social characters. These are sarcastic in nature. These provide us vivid picture of the characteristics of various castes or tribes. These produce meaningful evidence on the socio- economic and cultural conditions of the time. Sometimes articles of food and ornaments also constitute a part of these *jhagras*. Jats, Khattris, Baniyas, Brahmans, Barbers and Bards formed the subject matter of these.⁷⁴

Jhagra appeared to have made its public debut in the reign of Shah Jahan but it was not much popular. During late eighteenth century and onwards it became more

⁷⁰ Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Janjan* (ed.), New Patiala Printers Patiala , 1975,7.

⁷¹ *Ibid*,7.

⁷² Dyal Singh, *Janj Bhai Dyal Singh*, 44.

⁷³ *Ibid*; 45-47.

⁷⁴ Piara Singh Padam, *Punjabi Jhagre*(ed.), Sardar Sahit Bhawan, Patiala, 1974, 20.

popular. *Jhagra Tiunh Yaran Da* by Raja Ram is a contention between three friends Brahman, *nai* and *dum*.⁷⁵ Their conversation in *jhagra* provides ample information about the status and duties of these three castes. Among Hindus, Brahmans were patronized by kings and nobles for their religious duties.⁷⁶

Though the Brahman was necessary for ceremonial and religious functions yet their position in the society declined due to their ill reputation. They were compared with butchers. Their golden days when they were worshipped were swamped.⁷⁷ On the festive occasions, they worked as *lagis* and shared their profession with *nais* and *dums*.⁷⁸

Nais due to their original profession were compared with impurity.⁷⁹ They were proud of their profession because nature has desired their lot like this only.⁸⁰ *Nais* were rewarded for their services by their patrons. Though they came from lower strata of society, they shared their status of subservience with Brahmans on festive occasions. They compared themselves with owls who could fly with the hawk (Brahman).⁸¹ Further *nai* boasted his profession for shaving hairs of all people. Because no one can shave his head and beard himself.⁸² *Dums* or Bards who belonged to lower section of society were satisfied with their profession. Because according to their tradition, they were blessed by Kalka Mai (the Goddess) for begging. They were beggars by birth and that was the secret of their prosperity.⁸³ Raja Ram described the relation of these three castes with their patrons such as *jajman* is the *khet* (field), Brahman is the owner while the *nai* is simply a *lava* (hired-reaper); and also that the *dum*, *jajman* and *purohit* were like brothers and sisters.⁸⁴

Another *jhagra*, *Jhagra Jatti Te Khatrani Da* is written by Tulsia Singh, a resident of Amritsar, in 1839. In this he presents the attitude of women of two

⁷⁵ Raja Ram, *Jhagra Tiunah Yaran da* (ed) Piara Singh, *Punjabi Jhagre*, 67.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*; 70.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*; 70.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸¹ *Ibid*; 67.

⁸² *Ibid*; 69.

⁸³ *Ibid*; 68.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*; 69.

different castes. In this *jhagra*, a Jat and a Khatri woman were depicted as the two main opposite characters. *Jhagra* started because of quarrelsome and short tempered nature of ladies.⁸⁵ It also traces the conflict of values between the two leading castes of the society, Jat and Khatri. In the prevalent socio-economic setup, both castes had influential positions. Jats formed main agriculturist class of the Punjab, while Khatri dominated the trading communities of the Punjab. When the *jhagra* was written, Jats were the prominent members of the ruling class under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. And Khatri on the other hand, also held eminent status in the administration as well as in army. In this *jhagra* both Jatti and Khatrani tried to establish their caste superiority in social order by dishonouring each other. Khatrani claimed to be of ancient solar (*surajvanshi*) origin of the Khatri⁸⁶ and proud Khatri's profession as *shahukar*.⁸⁷ She further stated that Khatri formed important part of the ruling class both under the Mughals and the Sikh rulers. Moreover Khatri had commanding influence over the peasant community. When ever they were in trouble, the money lender stood for their help.

“*wich kachheri de badda see, mere munsh churaya*”.⁸⁸

(This showed the Khatri's financial influence in the social setup).

In Khatrani's counter argument, Jatti stated that, the Khatri were not born moneylenders. Their economic status was due to the Jat agriculturalists whose grain was taken by them. For their economic prosperity, Khatri relied on agriculturist communities. Even Khatri's election as *panch* was also depended on the Jats.

“*damma wala jattan kita, peo daade nahi*”.⁸⁹

In the villages of the Punjab Jats had prominent place. In this *jhagra*, Tulsa Singh, through Jatti showed Jat's indispensable role in social and economic setup. According

⁸⁵ Tulsa Singh, *Jhagra Jatti ti Khatrani Da* (ed.), Piara Singh, *Punjabi Jhagre*, 72; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Significance of Jhagra Jatti ti Khatrani Da* (ed.), Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Politics, Society and Economy*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, 290.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*; 73.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*; 74.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*; 74.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*; 73,74.

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to Jatti, Jat brought barren land under cultivation and rest of the non-Jat population was totally worthless. Jatti argues that every one flourished over the labour of the Jat farmers because they produced food for everyone. Even the royalty also praised Jats during hunting expeditions.⁹⁰ Above mentioned arguments indicates importance of Jats in agrarian set up.

Tulsa Singh in his *jhagra* compared Khatri and Jat from economic point of view. According to the Khatrani, a wise Khatri could provide financial aid to the whole fraternity while a Jat with pocket full would ruin his family through his untoward acts.⁹¹ Occupational differences in both castes had reflected from their food habits also. As agriculturist, Jat worked hard in fields from morning to evening and consumed more diet than others. But a Khatri lived on light diet like curd and *fulka* (flat cake).

Social characteristics of both castes were depicted in *jhagra* clearly. During nineteenth century, male child was welcomed in the family because he could bring dowry whereas the daughter was to receive it.⁹² Due to the practice of female infanticide there was always an imbalance in the male female ratio and Jats preferred the idea of *karewa* marriage. Their women even after remarriage were respected by them. But the Khatri women hated the idea of second marriage. They could not afford even slightest blot on their chastity. Khatris respected their sister-in-law as mother while the younger brother's wife was equivalent to a daughter.⁹³

The nineteenth century was rich in Hindi literature too. Shiv Dyal and Jai Singh wrote *Kabit*. Kavi Ganesh wrote *Khand Kavya*, *Fatehnama Sri Guru khalsa Ji Ka*. Budh Singh translated Persian epic *Ayyaar Danish* in Hindi at the behest of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1811. Kavi Mohar Singh wrote *Ramcharit* for Lahore Darbar in the name of

⁹⁰ *Ibid*; 75.

⁹¹ *Ibid*; 74.

⁹² *Ibid*; 73.

⁹³ *Ibid*; 74; Daljinder Singh Johal, *Significance of Jhagra Jatti ti Khatrani Da*, 290-291.

Ramgeet. Budh Singh was also ordered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to translate *Panchtantar*.⁹⁴

Kavi Gwal's Vijay Vinod, a poetic work in Braj language can be regarded as representative work of the period. He was resident of Mathura. In 1834, he came to Lahore and soon, he acquired a prominent place in the Darbar under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. *Kavi Gwal* was a prolific poet and his work is a historical ballad in the form of a *khand kavya*. It was written in 1844 at the instance of Pandit Jalla, adviser of Raja Hira Singh. The work primarily dealt with the Lahore Darbar after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It gave a brief account of Raja Dhian Singh's rise in Lahore Darbar. A significant point to be noted about *Gwal's Vijay Vinod* is that the poet was very selective about the historical incidents. Only those events which have direct bearing on Raja Hira Singh were recorded by him. The comprehensive description of the Khalsa army and a vivid account of its battles were given by the poet. He criticized Sandhawalia Sardars and they were shown as villain.⁹⁵

Besides giving historical description of Lahore Darbar, *Gwal* also depicted social customs and rituals of contemporary society. On the birth of male child rejoicings were made, astrologer was called to prepare horoscope (*janampatri*).⁹⁶ Distributions were made.⁹⁷ *Durba* (a cord made of grass interwoven with mango leaves) was hung over the main door of the house. Rituals observed before and after death like *gao-daan* and *phul chugna* had been referred.⁹⁸

Kavi Gwal seems very much aware about the social evils prevalent in the Punjab. He depicts the custom of *sati* in detail. According to him at the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death his legally wedded wives were made to sit on the head of the pyre and the slave girls sat at his feet.⁹⁹ With Raja Dhian Singh fifteen queens performed *sati*. The queens had made number of charities before they became *sati*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Daljinder Singh Johal, *Society and Culture as Reflected in Punjabi Literature*, Ph.D Thesis, 26.

⁹⁵ *Kavi Gwal, Vijay Vinod*, Shamsher Singh (ed.), 147; Sarabjeet Sagar, *Kavi Gwal's Vijay Vinod*, (ed.) J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, 235-242.

⁹⁶ *Kavi Gwal, Vijay Vinod*, 138.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*; 139.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*; 140, 145.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*; 147.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*; 200.

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As a court poet of Lahore Darbar, *kavi* Gwal recorded detail descriptions of coronation ceremonies held in Lahore Darbar after Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The coronation of Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh were illustrated in a grand manner.¹⁰¹

Umdat-ut-Tawarikh in five volumes by Sohan Lal Suri is an important historical document on the life and times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his predecessors and successors. Sohan Lal Suri was first diarist and then a chronicler of the reign of Ranjit Singh. *Umdat ut Tawarikh* covered the period of history of Punjab from the foundation of Sikh *panth* by Guru Nanak Dev in 1469 to 1849 the year of annexation of the Punjab into British Empire. From 1771, Sohan Lal's father, Ganpat Rai had recorded the events connected with Sardar Charat Singh, his son Mahan Singh and his grandson Ranjit Singh. Sohan Lal started his record in 1812 and continued to keep it till the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.¹⁰² Sohan Lal was closely associated with the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a *vakil*. He could verify the records from the personages of the period and also had direct access to official reports and records. His chronicle, therefore, is considered as an authoritative, comprehensive and coherent among all the extant indigenous sources of history of the early nineteenth century Punjab.

The voluminous work by Sohan Lal Suri consists of five *daftar*s or volumes. The first *daftar* covers the period from Guru Nanak to 1771, the year of Abdali's last invasion. By this time Sardar Charat Singh had came into power. The second *daftar* deals with the career of Sardar Charat Singh, ascendancy of Ranjit Singh, expansion and consolidation of the kingdom of Lahore with its well defined boundaries covering the period upto 1830. At this time the glory of the kingdom and grandeur of the court of Lahore was at its zenith. The third *daftar* in five parts is the narrative of events from 1831 to the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. The fourth *daftar* in three parts covers the period from 1839 to 1845. These were the most unfortunate years in the history of the Punjab. The successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the courtiers engaged

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*; 150, 171, 201.

¹⁰² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, DaftarII, (Pbi.) Preface, IIX.

themselves in incessant intrigues at the court. The last *daftar* deals with the last phase of the kingdom of Lahore from 1845 to 1849 when the deterioration in managing affairs of the state was leading it towards annexation.¹⁰³

Sohan Lal in his account recorded every important event of Lahore Darbar in detail. For a proper understanding of the political process of Ranjit Singh's career, *Umdat* proved as very important source. Besides providing political and administrative information, Suri has much to offer on many other aspects which proved very vital for socio-cultural history of the Punjab.

As Sohan Lal concentrated on the political history of Lahore Darbar, he also provided interesting information about the nobility and ruling class of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The author provided some fascinating insights into the life style of the ruling class who frequently used *pashmina*, Brocade, Silk and Muslin as their dress material. Yellow or Green was court colour of Lahore Darbar. Yellow dresses were especially worn on special occasions like *basant* and *baisakhi* by the Maharaja and his court. Even the platoons were ordered to attire yellow dresses. Various types of pieces of stones and jewels were also used by them.¹⁰⁴

The description of Nau Nihal Singh's wedding is extremely interesting. He referred a number of rituals related to wedding like *shagan*, *watna*, *tel*, *tambol*, *barat*, *lavan* and *khat*. He portrayed *tambol* ceremony and *barat* of Nau Nihal Singh in a very fascinating manner.¹⁰⁵ Similarly rituals related to death were depicted in detail. Death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh were illustrated with grief alongwith all rites and rituals.¹⁰⁶ Administrative celebrations such as coronation of new ruler and celebrations after new conquest were discussed in detail. Coronation of Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh were illustrated in a grand manner with their specific rites.¹⁰⁷ Celebrations after every victory showed the grandeur of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his army.

¹⁰³ Suri, *Umdat*, Daftar II, XXV-XXVII.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, Daftar II, 338, 438, 487; Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 406.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, Daftar III, 436-447.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, Daftar 486-89; Daftar IV 116-130.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, Daftar IV, 45, 160, 304.

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Sohan Lal also referred hunting, dance, mock battles, horsemanship and swordsmanship as the main source of entertainment. Hunting expeditions were arranged for royalty. On every festive occasion dance was performed by dancing girls. On *dussehra* day, *lanka* was erected and mock battles were fought there for the entertainment of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his guests.¹⁰⁸ *Umdat* was full with frequent references of celebrations of festivals like *dussehra*, *holi*, *basant*, *baisakhi*, *diwali*, *lohri*, *maghi* and *nauroj*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's liberal religious policy was clearly highlighted by Suri by giving a fair idea of his charities and frequent visits to the holy places of all religions. As the court chronicle of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Suri discussed all those events which show his loyalty towards Lahore Darbar. But some other events like Moran's affair and Ranjit Singh's marriage with Gul Badan Begum which would stab Maharaja Ranjit Singh's image were not even touched by him. He praised the magnanimity of the Maharaja.

Char Bagh-i-Punjab by Ganesh Das Badhera, was another work on the kingdom of Ranjit Singh containing information on social, religious and cultural life of the Punjabis, besides bringing an historical and geographical account of the Punjab. Ganesh Das completed this work in 1849, soon after the annexation of the kingdom of Lahore to the British empire. *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* was compiled for presentation to some British officers, *sahib-i-walaqadar*, whose name had not been mentioned. According to Dr. Kirpal Singh, *Char Bagh* signified a garden constructed by the Mughal emperor, Babur. The chief characteristic of Punjab as signified in the title is that it had all sort of fruits and flowers similarly it provided us information on different aspects.¹⁰⁹

Ganesh Das, a Khatri of Badhera sub caste, introduced himself as the *qanungo* of the *pargana* of Gujrat and a *zamindar* of that town in the *Chaj doab*.¹¹⁰ The evidences presented by him on Sikh polity are significant. For him the Khalsa was an aggregate of individual Singhs who were politically active. He distinguishes Ranjit Singh from other rulers because of his successes. Ganesh Das paid his best attention

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, Daftar II, 309,361-62,373-74,409,484-85.

¹⁰⁹ Kirpal Singh, "Char Bagh-i-Punjab by Ganesh Das", Proceeding of Panjab History Conference, Punjabi University Patiala, 1975,22.

¹¹⁰ J.S.Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*,13.

to the one class of the people of the Punjab, the Khattris. He specifically referred number of Khatri families living in the towns and villages of the Punjab.¹¹¹

The important portion of the book is geographic-cultural survey of the Punjab giving details of rivers, *doabs*, religious persons, local fairs, legends like *Sohni Mahiwal*, *Heer Ranjha*, *Mirza Sahiba*, *Haqiqat Rai* the martyr and *Radhi* the *sati*. This helps us to know the social and cultural life of people of the Punjab.¹¹² Ganesh Das's information on cities and towns of the Punjab, placed together, becomes a meaningful comment on the Sikh rule. He not only mentions their names but also gives their earlier history and important historical events connected with these. He also mentions important places of worship, prominent persons including writers of the past and those who were contemporary to him who belonged to those places. Not only does he mention names of places, he states their significance also.

Rattan Singh Bhangu's *Prachin Panth Parkash* was written in 1841 when the Sikhs were plunged into intrigue and internecine slaughter in the house of Ranjit Singh. While stating his purpose Bhangu wrote that he was dissatisfied with the account of Sikhs as narrated by Buta Shah to the British. He thought that a Muslim writer will never narrate all the facts. Therefore he went to Captain William Murray who was deputed by the British for writing history of the Sikhs. Bhangu thinks that he justified and successfully described the true history of the Sikhs. Bhangu depicted the succession of the ten Gurus and struggle for sovereignty of the Sikhs.¹¹³ In his account he presents a vivid picture of social condition of the Punjab. He mentions the composition of Khalsa which consisted of lower castes.¹¹⁴

Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh by Diwan Amar Nath, is a contemporary Persian source of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He starts his account from the year 1780 and gives a narration of events till 1836-37. The author was son of Raja Dina Nath, an influential courtier of the Maharaja. The writer was commissioned by the Maharaja to

¹¹¹ *Ibid*,15.

¹¹² Ganesh Dass, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (ed.) Kirpal Singh, The Historical Study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Times, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1994,26.

¹¹³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1962, 20; S.S.Hans, "Rattan Singh Bhandu's Purpose of Writing the Prachin Panth Parkash", Proceeding of Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University Patiala, 1975, 75-82.

¹¹⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, 40.

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write *Zafarnama* in 1832-33 as it had been stated by the author himself. The purpose of writing *Zafarnama* was to celebrate the victory of Lahore Darbar over Peshawar in 1834.¹¹⁵ It traced the historical events of forty years of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with a rare beauty. Amar Nath's approach however was selective. Only those events had been chosen by him which had been left out by Sohan Lal Suri. He had selected most important events and wrote about them in his own peculiar literary style. For instance he gave detailed account of the coronation ceremony of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹¹⁶ He depicted Moran's beauty in one chapter.¹¹⁷ He gave information of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's marriage with a Muslim dancing girl Gul Bahar Begum.¹¹⁸ Amar Nath described Nau Nihal Singh's wedding in detail and devoted one chapter. He wrote that with chanting of hymns from the Hindu and Sikh scriptures, the couple was made cirambulation round the burning fire at midnight. The appropriate hour had been selected by the astrologers.¹¹⁹ Amar Nath's information regarding the Maharaja's administration depicted his commonsense and sagacity. He had given the chronology in *hijari* and *bikrami samvats*. The polity of Lahore Darbar had been brought to light with keen eye which had been taken up by him for description.

Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar by Ram Sukh Rao was written in Gurmukhi script which was fairly used in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Punjab. Ram Sukh Rao's work was perhaps the only contemporary historical work which provided interesting and refreshing information about Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Ram Sukh identified himself as a Brahman. He was appointed as a tutor to the young Fateh Singh and appears to have remained close to him ever since. He was assigned a *jagir*, a grant of daily allowance and a *haveli* as well.¹²⁰ Ram Sukh had a fairly pragmatic purpose while writing his work. He wanted to be duly rewarded for this service.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed.) Kirpal Singh; Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, "Iqbal Nama Maharaja Ranjit Singh or Zafarnama Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *Journal of Regional History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2001, 1-2.

¹¹⁶ Kirpal Singh, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, 14-15.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 19, 20.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 183-188.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 231.

¹²⁰ Ram Sukh Rao, *Shri Fateh Singh Partap Parbhakar* (e.d.) Joginder kaur, Patiala, 1980, 5.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 5, 7.

Ram Sukh Rao focuses on the political history of the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The work covered all those conquests and expeditions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in which Fateh Singh Ahluwalia himself or his forces participated. Beside the political history, Ram Sukh Rao also throws light on the existing social structure of the society. The common people in his work were referred as *aam*, *khilkat* and *kamam*.¹²² Ram Sukh Rao mentioned that every caste or professional group (*qaum*) lived in separate quarters (*muhallas*). He gave few references to the professional people and artisans who were in the relation to Fateh Singh.¹²³ He also throws light on religious persons of Sikhs and Hindus. Ram Sukh Rao's interest in Islam was rather limited. Apart from one short reference to Aurangzeb's bigotry and persecution of the Hindus by him, he generally did not take notice of Islam as a set of religious beliefs and practices.¹²⁴ Ram Sukh Rao gave the impression that the astrologers (*gyotishis*) were holding an important place in all the ceremonies and social occasions, particularly related to birth, marriage and death.¹²⁵

Ram Sukh Rao provided interesting information about the nobility of Maharaja Ranjit Singh which was drawn from various social classes, communities and nationalities. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia created his own nobility giving them the ranks of courtiers (*musahib*) and depending on them almost entirely for his administration and diplomatic deals.¹²⁶ The author provided some fascinating insights into the life style of the ruling class. According to him, nobles lived in forts like *havelis* or mansions. Ram Sikh Rao had an interesting comment on the houses of Sahib Singh Bhangi, the Ramgharhias and the other Sardars. He says that these were like the houses of the poor (*gharibon-ke-kothe*) without any of the features generally associated with the residences of the aristocracy. Even the big *zamindars* constructed their houses along with underground chambers (*tah-khanas*) or (*sard-khanas*).¹²⁷

¹²² *Aam*-The people who were excluded from charity. *Khilkat*- People who lived in charity like Bahmans, *fqirs*, *sadhus*, *bhats* and *mirasis*. *Kaman*-Artisans. *Ibid*, 5.

¹²³ *Ibid*; 55.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*; 63.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*; 7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*; 51

¹²⁷ *Ibid*; 52.

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Regarding the dresses of the nobles, Ram Sukh Rao gave the impression that they were generally dressed in the Mughal style. Costly ornaments were worn. In fact, different stones were worn during different seasons and occasions.¹²⁸ Hunting and horse riding were their source of entertainment.¹²⁹

Ram Sukh Rao's detailed description of the stages and ceremonies involved in the weddings of Fateh Singh and Kunwar Nihal Singh is extremely interesting. The author gives the impression that it was customary for the bridegroom to take *pahul* before getting married. Numbers of ceremonies like *maiyan*, *sehra bandi*, *barat* and *lawan* were also discussed by him.¹³⁰ Ram Sukh Rao's account of the rites preceding and following death is equally comprehensive.¹³¹ Ram Sukh Rao provided a graphic description of the festivals such as *holi*, *basant*, *dussehra* and *janamashtami*. The detail given by him not only throws light on the way in which these festivals were celebrated but also on the manners of the ruling classes and their relations with the sovereign.¹³²

Ram Sukh Rao's information regarding the participation of women in politics was very interesting. He gave number of references of such women like *mai* Anokhi, widow of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, *mai* Raj Kaur, mother-in-law of Mohar Singh and Murar Singh, Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh, Ram Kaur and Raj Kaur, widows of Baghel Singh.¹³³ It shows that the Sikh women who belonged to the ruling classes enjoyed certain privileges.

Ahmad Shah Batalvi was a resident of Batala and contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. *Tarikh-i-Punjab* by Ahmad Shah Batalvi has its own importance in the historical literature. He wrote this book at the behest of Lt. Murry, who was appointed as representative at Ludhiana. Captain Wade also gave patronization to Ahmad Shah. Beside their patronization, Ahmad Shah maintained good relations with Maharaja

¹²⁸ *Ibid*; 52.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*; 69.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*; 57-58.

¹³¹ *Ibid*; 58-59.

¹³² *Ibid*, 67-68.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 37,38.

Ranjit Singh. He eulogized the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab.¹³⁴ Ahmad Shah's book was divided in three parts. First part of the book was related to the history of the Sikh Gurus. Second part of book was devoted to Banda Bahadur. And the last part was dedicated to Sikh *misl*s particularly Sukarchakia *misl* till 1824.¹³⁵

While writing political, historical, romantic and folk literature, writers were conscious about the religious values also. During this period number of religious literature was produced which gave detailed account of life of Sikh Gurus. In 1769, Kesar Singh Chhiber wrote *Bansavalinama*, in 1773 Kirpal Singh wrote *Mehma Parkash*. Sarup Singh Bhalla also wrote *Mehma Parkash* in 1776. Kirpal Singh in *Mehma Parkash* gave an account of Guru Har Rai defending Dara Shikoh against the forces of Aurangzeb. It also contained short life sketches of ten Gurus in prose.¹³⁶ Whereas Sarup Singh Bhalla in *Mehma Parkash* traced the dates of births, death, years of pontification and other such important events relating to the lives of the Sikh Gurus.¹³⁷ Bhai Sukha Singh compiled his manuscript *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin* in 1797.¹³⁸

Thus we can say that, in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Punjab, there is an actual awareness of society and culture. Since literature is considered as mirror of the society, no writer can write without getting influenced from social and cultural life of the area he belongs. The most important literary historical phenomenon of Punjabi literature during the nineteenth century was its transformation from Indo-Muslim literary tradition into a Sikh-Punjabi tradition.

It is equally significant that numbers of Muslim *qissakars* were fairly large as compared to their counterparts among the Hindus and the Sikhs. They carried on the Punjabi literary tradition and made an overwhelming contribution to Punjabi

¹³⁴ Ahmad Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Gurbaksh Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, 4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

¹³⁶ Surjit Hans, *Sikh History From Sikh Literature*, 281.

¹³⁷ Satnam Kaur, "Historical Significance of Mehima Prakash", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, 282.

¹³⁸ Surjit Hans, *Sikh History From Sikh Literature*, 265.

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literature. During this period Punjabi remained the prominent medium of writing. The writers were aware about the importance of Punjabi as language of masses. Some writers presented themselves as Punjabis. There was little scope of economic rewards for the Muslim poets during the eighteenth century when the Sikhs began to constitute the ruling class. Of course the condition changed during the early nineteenth century under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Patronage was given to them who eulogize the rulers.

The heroic literature should be seen as another important aspect of this period. From the ballads dealing with the violent society becomes obvious that people in those days were fascinated by martial glory. If on the one hand, the establishment and consolidation of the Lahore kingdom fired the imagination and sensibilities of the contemporary poets and writers, on the other, its abrupt fall equally involved them to give explanations of the contemporary historical events. Significantly it is quite clear from a persusal of the various poetical compositions that the process of decline of Lahore kingdom involved more poets than its rise. Surprisingly, the aspect of fall of the Sikh power is found in *vars*, *jangnamas* and *si-harfis*. Though the function of heroic literature during the first half of the nineteenth century was clearly political even then it provided information about society and culture. *Jangnama* by Qadir Yar and Ram Dial Anand gave ample information about rituals performed during and after death. *Si-harfi* of Jafar Beg was devoted to the rituals of death. Sawan Yar in his *si-harfi* discussed the love affair of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Moran. *Var Haqiqat Rai* is very important due to its reflections on socio-cultural life of the people. It gives useful information regarding the existing rites and rituals observed during birth, marriage and death.

In the nineteenth century, there was remarkable shift in compositional process of Punjabi *qissas*. In the romantic literature ample emphasis was given to the indigenous Punjabi *qissas*. Though there was love stories drawn from Ancient Indian stocks and Persian Arabic cultural heritage also form the subject matter. *Jhagra* and *janj* became important part of literature during this century. The most distinguishing feature of these genres was that they were relatively close to the ordinary world of experience and actions. They derived their material from the short and simple annals of the poor. They provided reflections of the social world around them. Numerous evidences on various castes, food items, dresses, jewellery and rituals were easily gathered from these genres.

Due to state patronage, numbers of historical works were produced in which Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Ram Sukh Rao's, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabakar* and *diwan* Amar Nath's *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* were considered very important. Moreover we can say that the literature produced during late eighteenth and early nineteenth was very remarkable from the political as well as from the socio-cultural point of view. This indicates a better mutual understanding among the communities of the Punjab. It may also be treated as reflections of the active participation of the members of all the three communities in the affairs of the state.

CHAPTER- VIII

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing analysis of the chapters a fair idea can be formed about the socio-cultural dimensions of the Punjab during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Punjab in the early eighteenth century was preceded by a succession of events which began with the execution of Banda Bahadur in 1716 A.D. The execution was followed by the persecution of the Sikhs at the hands of the successive Mughal governors, occupation of the Punjab by Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan-Sikh struggle for supremacy and the emergence of the Sikhs as a political power, resulting in the occupation of the Punjab plains between the Sutlej and the Indus by a number of Sikh chiefs, major and minor, each zealously guarding his independence and possessions and encroaching upon those of his neighbours and old associates. Their internal strife in the last quarter of the eighteenth century ended in the rise of a powerful kingdom of Lahore under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early nineteenth century.

With the decline of Mughal-Afghan empire new occupational structure in which peasantry had predominant role came into existence. But still other classes and communities had important role in the social structure. The ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore grew with its expanding political and administrative organization under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Its composition reflected the social geography of the region and the historical developments of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. Sikh and non-Sikh principalities had come into existence. Maharaja Ranjit Singh subverted more principalities in the Punjab than any other ruler. Nevertheless, he preserved a large number of subordinate chiefs as vassals or autonomous rulers under his political control. The majority of the new ruling class was composed of the Punjabis with Jats as the dominant group. The non-Jats were also represented among the ruling class and non-Sikhs among the *jagirdars*, included both Hindus and Muslims. In the process of unification under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, many of the erstwhile chiefs, vassals and *jagirdars* were absorbed into the ruling class.

The ruling class of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the whole was heterogeneous in its composition. In terms of its proportion the Sikhs were 49 per cent of the total, Hindus were around 29 per cent, Muslims 16 per cent and Christians constituted about 6 per cent. The social background of the nobility of the Lahore Darbar was equally diverse. About one-fifth of the members were the dispossessed chiefs and their dependents who were mostly Sikh *misldars*, Rajputs, Afghans and Pathans. Sardars Fateh Singh, Mit Singh Padania, Attar Singh Dhari, Hukm Singh Attari and Hukma Singh Chimni represented the families of Sikh *misldars*. Other men were from the families of the Pathan rulers of Kasur, Multan and Jhang. This policy of recruitment followed by Ranjit Singh was aimed at the conciliation of the dispossessed and weakened chiefs and also to pacify the feelings of the community to which they belonged.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh could not depend upon the dispossessed chiefs alone. He, therefore, added a fresh element to the nobility. Such nobles were picked up by the Maharaja on the basis of their merit and ability. They were given important positions in the civil administration as well as in the army. Almost all of them were the holders of large *jagirs*. A large number of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus from non-aristocratic background were picked up by him to serve the state. The families like Attariwalas, the Majithias, the Faqirs and Jamwals were important families. More new members were inducted from within and outside the core region. The Jamwal brothers Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh who were the most important and the most influential members of the nobility, were inducted from outside the core region. It needs to be emphasized that the new ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore was by and large Punjabi. They came from amongst the social groups that were evaluated relatively low in the social hierarchy in the late eighteenth century. Besides the Jat Sikhs, other classes and communities like the Ramgarhias, Barbers, Brahmans and Khatris were now part of the ruling class. Exclusiveness of the old political elites of the Mughal times was now a thing of the past.

In the terms of religious affiliations Brahmans, *mullas*, *bhais*, *sheikhs* and *sufis* dominated the social, religious and cultural life of the people. The economy of the Punjab was run by traditional trading communities in which Khatris, Aroras and Banias occupied prominent place. They received special favours from the state. From

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the functional point there were adjustments or continuities in the traditional social structure of the Punjab. Artisans and menials formed essential part of the village society. Without their support the village economy could not run smoothly. They constituted the lower strata of the society but their services were of high value for society. Among their manifold duties, sometimes agricultural labour was also performed by them. Entertainment of the people was done by special entertainer classes consisted of persons who followed specialized professions for the amusement of people. They were full of witty jokes and humour.

The traditional social order was dominated by the patriarchy in social, economic and political spheres. Woman did not enjoy equal status with man. She was never considered fit for independence at any stage of her life. She was under the care of her parents, as a daughter, under the order of her husband after marriage, and totally dependent on her son, after becoming a widow. The home was considered to be the most important place for woman. A woman who stayed at home has always the preference. Her main function was to procreate and expectation from her was to produce sons.

The customs like child marriage, dowry, *sati*, *purda*, female infanticide and prohibition on widow remarriage, have played havoc with the condition of women. Their rights and liberties have always been encroached upon by patriarchy in different ways. Different methods were adopted to put an end to the life of an infant girl. Stifling, poisoning and drowning were some methods of infanticide. Marriage was considered to be the ultimate goal for a girl. A premature liaison of a girl was a social odium and a grown up unmarried girl was a source of pain for the parents. The approximate marriageable age was about three to ten. The custom of dowry brought financial debt to the girl's parents. The dowry given to her was considered as her property but she had no power to control or utilized it. The property whatever a married woman acquired whether by her own self exertions or otherwise, belonged to her husband. The custom of *sati* was taken as a pride among the Rajputs. The belief of entering heaven with her husband gave her incredible energy to dedicate herself to sacrifice. The *satis* were considered sacred; their last words were believed to be Prophetic, their blessings eagerly sought for and their curse dreaded. It became place of worship where *sati* was performed. The practice of *sati* was popular among the

nobles and upper classes of both Hindus and Sikhs but not observed by the lower sections. Among the Hindus, except Rajputs, widowhood was compulsory. The Muslims, Sikhs and lower Hindus preferred widow remarriage. Jats, agricultural classes and artisans practiced widow remarriage through the ceremony called *karewa* or *chadar pauna* and Muslims through *nikah sani*. It was optional for the widow to marry either the eldest or the youngest brother of the deceased husband. Widow can marry out of the family through *therwa*.

Slavery was very common among the women of the Punjab. The sale and purchase of girls and women was called *bardah faroshi*. A special class of people called *kanjars* carried on this profession. If a girl refused to become a harlot, she was thrown inside a dark room without water and food. Institution of prostitution was typically urban institution. The dancing girls and prostitutes had no social status, no respect in the society. They lived in separate areas. *Bazaar-i-kanjran* and *bazaar-i-Mughlan* were famous places for prostitutes in Amritsar. In Lahore *hira mandi* was famous and colourful area for them. They possessed enchanting beauty, sweet smiles, melodious voices, bewitching movements and were fully trained in the art of seduction. Such royal dancing girls enjoyed many privileges. It seemed that the prostitutes had a recognized place and functions in the urban society, and were not always treated with contempt or prudery.

There were nevertheless a few feminine characters that had played significant part in influencing the course of history. The most obvious examples are *mai* Anokhi, the widow of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Raj Kaur, mother of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, *mai* Sada Kaur mother in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, *mai* Chand Kaur wife of Kharak Singh. Maharani Jindan, wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, tried to anticipate the coming showdown with the British by inspiring the Khalsa army to have a test of their strength through an open encounter with them. As queen regent Rani Jindan could, therefore, take the bold leap of trying to teach the British a lesson. In Punjabi literary source *Var Shah Muhammad*, Rani Jindan's desire for revenge for her brother's murder has been blamed as the cause of the Anglo Sikh war of 1845-46. She is to be remembered not for what she could achieve. She would remain closer to Punjabi hearts as the luminous minstrel of Punjabi aspirations. These are the exceptional examples which showed the potentialities of women.

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The position and condition of woman on the whole was in conformity with the patriarchal framework that was of subordination. All decisions relating to her were taken by men in the family. Despite her many limitations, the authority of a woman in the household, both among rich and poor, was very extensive and most of the money transactions passed through her hands. Only she was to decide as to what that family shall eat and how much her husband would spend. Woman in general, grinded corn and cooked food with her own hands. She decided the household matters. Such duties were looked upon as proper accomplishment for woman of all classes. Even she was given equal opportunities in religious as well as in social affairs. All the ceremonies and rituals in human life were almost related to the women. In the wedding ceremonies, she was considered as a main centre of attraction. In spite of her subordinate social position woman was indispensable in the day to day affairs of the household.

It will not be unfair to presume further that the domestic comforts of a large portion of the population of the Punjab during the period under study were not at variance with those of the conditions in the late nineteenth century. The houses of the people in the countryside were simple to the extreme. A house was made of mud bricks, plastered with a mixture of earth and cow dung. There used to be one or two cots besides a low stool called *pirah* in homes in the name of furniture. Rural habitation was chosen generally on a raised ground where there was an easy availability of water and land for cultivation all around. The village was composed of houses cottages adjoining one another, for the various classes, those of the untouchables or low classes lying on the outskirts. In the Punjab such houses were identified as *thattis* or *chamarhli*. An average house represented the minimum that human beings want for protection from cold, rain or tropical sun. Four mud walls enclosed a small space with a roof of thatch or branches and leaves. A small opening in the front wall was left out for entrance which might or might not be fitted with a door. The floor was trodden earth, sometimes plastered with cow-dung.

The study of material comforts helps us in comprehending the status of various classes in the society. The people of all classes enjoyed different types of living standards. From these comforts, one can easily judge their economic as well as their social status. In village for instance, peasants and artisans had small and *kucca*

house with one room and small courtyard. The courtyard had used for multi-purposes. Their families spent more than half of the day in the courtyard. And for women, courtyard was like a stage where they performed various duties. Only rich and influential people had *pucca* house with two or three rooms and sometimes double storey. Artisans lived in separate localities. The residences of the *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *sunar* and the *julahas* were generally within the precincts of the village.

Dwellings in cities were more congested and multi-storeyed because of less space. In well to do families one room generally was used as *baithak* where male guests were received. A raised platform or *thara* was main the centre of attraction in the cities because number of works such as spinning, sewing, embroidery and gossiping or quarrelling was performed in this part of the house. Traders and merchants used their houses for dual purposes, business and residence. The royalty and members of ruling class lived in palatial houses, which were like big mansions called *havelis*. They spent huge amount of money in construction of their dwellings. They also built rest houses or small orchards called *bagichis* for their pleasure at different places. Decoration was the main feature of such dwellings which was generally done by the women. Common people decorated their walls with the images of mythological characters or the images of animals, in which peacock had important place because it symbolized happiness. Carpets, hangings, mirrors and curtains were additions to the living areas of the wealthy. Number of superstitions was followed while constructing the houses.

Wheat, maize and rice consisted staple food of the Punjab. Common people lived on simple food. *Khichari* and *churi* was mainly eaten by them. Milk and milk products were commonly used. *Sarson ka sag* with *makki ki roti* was favourite dish among the Punjabis during winters. During the festive occasions various types of sweetmeats were prepared. Goat, chicken and beef was a main part of the diet of the Muslims. The Hindus and Sikhs were generally vegetarian; Sikhs were permitted to eat *jhatka* meat only. To make food more spicy variety of pickles and spices were used. Usually three times meals was taken in a day. The diet of wealthier classes contained rich variety of dry fruits and exotic spices. Well planned and luxurious royal kitchen, with a large number of officials and subordinate staff were maintained by them. Fruits, dry-fruits, sweetmeats, pickles and meat were main component of

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diet. Royalty and common man was very much fond of intoxicants such as opium, hump, Charas, *post* and different varieties of wine. Drinking parties were organized by the nobility. They were even allowed to distill liquor without any restriction.

Dresses, clothes and costumes regarded as one of the best indicators to distinguish between social class, sexes, occupations and religious groups. A *kurta*, *langota* or *pyjama* and a *chaddar* was usually common dress of men. While on working hours these garments were discarded. *Lungi* was common dress among both men and women. For a woman a *kurti*, *ghagra*, *salwar* and *dupatta* were ideal dress. *Phulkari* was commonly used by the women. Material used for their clothes were home-grown. Religious classes of all religions were easily identified with their distinctive dresses. The dresses of royalty and nobility were made of silk, brocade, muslin and pashmina. They spent huge money on their dresses. In Lahore Darbar court colour was yellow or green and on festive occasions every one was ordered to attire in yellow. Maharaja Ranjit Singh though dressed in simple, but he liked to be surrounded by well-dressed and richly embellished people. *Raja* Suchet Singh's semi-military and semi-court costume in Lahore Darbar fascinated everyone. Even the European officers were identified with their distinctive dresses. Maharaja Ranjit Singh borrowed idea of uniform of army from British, and brought some changes in his army. Every unit of his army could be distinguished by colour of its uniform.

Ornaments and jewellery attracted both sexes. They enhanced individual's beauty, established distinctive mark of sex, splendour and grandeur. Among Hindus ornaments had ritualistic as well as social significance. For a Hindu woman it indicated her marital status. Even from infancy ornaments were adorned. It seemed that royalty and nobility had great passion for wearing ornaments. Maharaja Ranjit Singh usually wore the diamond koh-i-nur on his arm and his courtiers were also fully loaded with different types of jewellery.

Means of recreation and entertainment exhibits the values, beliefs, attitudes of the members of the society. By organizing fairs and festivals, people relieve their tension and stresses of life. Irrespective of religious beliefs, people of the Punjab, participate in these festivals and games, which shows the openness of the society. The society of Punjab is known for its chivalry, bravery and openness transcending

religious affiliations and beliefs. Punjab like other regions of India, too had its characteristics and cultural traits as reflected in its fairs at regional, sub-regional and local level.

These aspects of the cultural fabric were woven around the socio-cultural and economic traits of the region. The fairs and festivals served a twin purpose: religious and social. To a devout, a visit to holy place and a dip in the sacred waters was to be the means of attaining religious merit, but to a common man these have social and economic significance too. In the early nineteenth century Punjab, the means of communications was slow and the fairs and festivals served as a meeting ground for people. These also helped in obliterating minor local and provincial differences. A fair provided an opportunity and space for the organization of an elaborate village market so that the people make necessary purchases of house-hold goods and other articles that were otherwise brought from the nearest urban market. A bustling market sprang up, in which articles of food, products of local handicrafts, toys, glass bangles, and an assortment of all kinds of articles for domestic use were on display. There were swings, acrobats, jugglers, wrestlers, actors, singers and dancers. They entertained the multitude with their performances.

In every society, human being follows customs, rites and ceremonies. These are formal, ceremonial act or procedure prescribed in religious or other solemn use, which has the force of law. The customs are more than mere aggregate of individual habits, as custom is a way tacitly supported by social approval. Customs are more than mere aggregate of individual habits; a custom is a way tacitly supported by social approval. In simple language the actual enduring regularities in social behaviour, accepted by most members of a group or society. Customs influenced the way people dress, eating pattern etc. However the term rites are used for a social custom or ceremony generally associated with passage from one important stage to another in someone's life like birth, initiations, marriage and death. To comprehend the society at a particular point of time it is always essential to know its custom, rites and ceremonies since that play an important role in the lives of the people. These are the core features of a society. Society even judged the respectability of a person by the account of care and attention he gives to fulfillment of these social and religious norms. These may vary on the basis of caste, community and religion.

Conclusion

The most conspicuous events of domestic life were naturally the various stages of growth in the life of a person, namely birth, nuptial and death which were associated with numbers of rites, customs and ceremonies. Most of the ceremonies were common among the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Among the Hindus, ceremonies started even before the birth of a child called *reetan*. To prevent harm to the mother or the child, a number of precautions were taken like an iron bangle, fire pot, water, grain were placed near the cot of the mother. Among Hindus a woman was considered impure and remains confined to the house for first ten days or more as the period is called *sutak*. The duration of *sutak* varied among different castes for instance ten days among Brahmins, twelve among Khatris, fifteen among Vaisyas and thirty among Sudra. Hindus and Sikhs performed ceremony of *chhathi* which was closely associated with the ceremony of *aqiqa* performed by the Muslims. Religious books were consulted for the naming ceremony of the male child. Wearing of *janeo* among Hindus symbolized the Trinity. To maintain their separate identity Muslims performed ceremony of circumcision or *sunnat*.

Marriage or *vivaha* constituted the most engrossing event of the life which offered an occasion for feasts, gatherings and rejoicings. Numbers of rites and rituals were associated with it. *Bichola* or *lagi* like Brahmins, barbars (*nais*) and the bards (*dums* or *bhats*) played a significant role. The months of *magh*, *phagun*, *baisakh*, *jeth* and *asarh* were considered lucky for marriages. But Spring was considered the most favourable season for marriage. Special sweetmeats called *bhaji* were prepared. The ceremonies of *watna* or *maian pauna*, *navai dhuvai*, *tel charhauna*, *chappan bhannana*, *tambol*, *surma pavai*, *vag pharai*, *pani varna* and *gana* were common among Hindus and Sikhs. Muslims observed *nikasi* rite a day or two days before the wedding. Rituals like *til-khelna* and *dewar godi mein baithana* were signified the importance male child in society.

Like the birth and marriage, death too had its own set of rites which were observed before and after death. The death ceremonies prevalent amongst Sikhs were same as observed by the Hindus. Rites of *gow-daan*, *chuli-chhadna* and *diva-vatti* were performed before death by both Hindus and Sikhs. Muslims sacrificed goats to escape from death. Brahmins applied *tilak* to deceased's forehead and *janeo* was placed round his neck. Rites of *pind daan karna*, *adhmarg*, *tinka torna* and *kapal*

kirya were observed after the death by the Hindus and Sikhs. Special Brahman called *acharaj* performed funeral ceremonies. Period of mourning or *matam* varied from ten to thirteen days. *Phul chugna* was an important ceremony among the Hindu and the Sikhs which was done on the fourth day after the cremation. The rites of *qul khwani* and *phul-patri* were also performed by Muslims. *Kirya karam* was considered as the last ceremony and one year later *sharadh* ceremony was performed.

In addition to above mentioned rituals and ceremonies, there were some other ceremonies, which were celebrated by the ruling class and common men also enjoyed it. Whenever Maharaja Ranjit Singh or his army conquered any area, that occasion was celebrated at a large scale. Religious places were visited, illuminations were made and charities were distributed among the poor and needy. Heroes of the victory were given handsome rewards in form of *jagirs*, *khilats* and titles. Similarly coronation of a new ruler was most important administrative ceremony. A grand Darbar was held at Lahore, in which all the Rajas, princes, Sardars and feudatories offered *nazars* in token of allegiance to the new Maharaja. Worship of Ganeshji and the nine stars (*navgrah puja*) was performed and the mark of installation was first put by the *prohits*. Large sums of money and many other articles were distributed among the poor and needy.

The treatment of love and war by the creative writers of this period enable us to appreciate the integrative role of this literature. It is significant to point out that during the period between 1750 and 1850 the volume of Punjabi literature increased considerably. The number of known poets exceeded a score. The writers of eighteenth century came from all parts of the Punjab. A large part of the writers came from the core area in the dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The writers belonged to all the three communities Sikh, Muslim and Hindu of the Punjab. At least one third of these writers were Muslims. Literature was created in the society and for the society. And if it was fabricated in common language then it would become more popular among the masses. The writers were conscious about the distinctive entity of Punjabi as a medium of communication for the common people. The tradition of Punjabi literature growing with the conscious efforts of Punjabi writers. Ahmad Yar and Waris Shah produced their works in the common language which was Punjabi.

Conclusion

It is significant to observe that even though Persian was court language of the Lahore Darbar, Punjabi emerged as a common medium of speech which tended to bring the diverse sections of the society closer. Most of the business in the daily meetings of the Lahore Darbar was conducted in Punjabi for the obvious reason that it was the only language which was best understood by the ruler and his courtiers. Even Punjabi titles were given to the chieftains. For instance, the title of *Nirmal Budh* was often awarded and some of the eminent recipients of this title were Lehna Singh Majithia, *bhai* Gobind Ram, Sher Singh, Amir Singh and Tej Singh. Large number of literature was written in Punjabi as well as in Persian for the masses. Sohan Lal Suri's monumental *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* was best example of the historical work produced in Persian during the first half of the nineteenth century. Ram Sukh Rao, a chronicler patronized by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, wrote a volume each on Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, his successor Bhag Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia himself, in Gurmukhi script. Number of works like *si-harfis*, *jangnamas*, *vars*, *jhagras*, *janjan* and *qissas* were written for the common man.

Although there is no evidence of direct patronization of literature, it is apparent that the emergence of the Punjab as sovereign state did have some impact on consolidating and unifying the existing literary trends. Enough of literature was written in the hope of reward from the royalty and the ruling class. But some writers like Waris Shah and Hashim Shah showed their contempt for the new rulers. Hashim Shah did not write even a single work under the inspiration to the Sikh rulers. Those who eulogized the Sikh rulers received due recognition. Ahmad Yar, contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, received a village as *jagir* for his work *Hatim Tai*. Sawan Yar praised the rule of Ranjit Singh in his *Si-harfi Sarkar ki*, emphasizing the Maharaja's sagacity, power, justice and patronage. Qadir Yar received a well (*khuh*) in reward for narrating the story of *Puran Bhagat*.

Literature of this period may be classified according to its subjects as secular, heroic, love ballads, religious and historical. In nineteenth century the largest bulk of literature was in verse, and the first striking feature, was its volume. Literary traditions or genres not only represented different phases or periods of history, but also contain valuable evidences for the social, economic and cultural life of the people.

The eighteenth century was period of political turmoil due to the triangular contest between Mughals, Afghans and the Sikhs for the sovereignty of the Punjab. This situation provided number of themes of heroic tradition like *vars*, *jangnamas* and *si-harfis*. Heroic poetry constituted a very significant portion of the Punjabi literature. It was written on current historical situations. The subject of heroic poetry did not go far back into the past. A short span of time between an event and the composition of the ballad made for the broad outlines of the battle. The ballad writers usually handled the facts of history and they could alter the facts on purpose to make the heroic figures shine in a nobler light. In heroic poetry, the deeds of a hero, when translate into heroic songs, reflected the entire strength of his clan for whom he had become an object of pride and admiration. In its infancy the heroic ideal of the warrior was always to be strong and courageous, to conquer all opponents, to win fame for the posterity to celebrate.

From the ballads dealing with the violent society it becomes obvious that the people in those days were fascinated by martial glory. It enhanced the value of the ideal at the cost of lives. Martial contrast of the hero and deserter is significant from their standpoint. None of the poets like Hakam Singh Darvesh, Najabat, Qadir Yar, Ram Dial, Sahai Singh, Shah Muhammad and Matak received any royal patronage. Their allegiance to the ideals of their own people is evident from numerous references in their works. The junction of heroic literature was clearly political. They also provided some evidences on social and cultural life of the people.

As a compliment to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Baron Charles Hugel remarked that the kingdom founded by him seemed to be the most wonderful object in the whole world. Like a skilful architect the Maharaja raised a 'majestic fabric' with the help of rather insignificant or unpromising fragments. Maharaja Ranjit Singh did evolve a structure of power by which he could reconcile all important sections of his subjects to his rule and he could turn many of them to be enthusiastic in his support. He revived prosperity and minimized oppression. His liberal and non-sectarian policies brought different sections of the society much closer together than had ever been the case before.

APPENDIX- I

Fairs in Jhang District (i)

| | Persons in whose honour fairs are held | Place | Date |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1. | Shah Jiwana | Shah Jiwana | 27 th <i>baisakh</i> |
| 2. | Pir Abdul Kadir | Pirkot Sadhana | ----- |
| 3. | Pir Tajuddin | Athara Hazara | 3 rd Friday in <i>chet</i> |
| 4. | Pir Abdul Rahman | Pir Abdul Rahman | 3 rd Thursday in <i>chet</i> |
| 5. | Pir Kalia | Kakki Kathia | ----- |
| 6. | Haji Kasim Bali | Bhamrala | 9 th <i>Zalhaj</i> |
| 7. | Shah Balel | Hassu Balel | 27 th <i>har</i> |
| 8. | Shah Sakhira | Mari | 10 th <i>har</i> |
| 9. | Fakir Gul Muhammad | Rodu Sultan | 7 th <i>kartik</i> |
| 10. | Hir and Ranjha | Jhang | First <i>magh</i> |
| 11. | Shah Sadik Nihang | Sadik Nihang | <i>maghar</i> |
| 12. | Jinda Kalia | Massan | <i>dussehra</i> |
| 13. | Mian Lal Kanju | Bulla Patowana | 12 th <i>baisakh</i> |
| 14. | Sidh Nath | Kirana | <i>chet</i> |

Source: Gazetteer of Jhang District, 1883-84, 51.

Fairs in Gujrat District (ii)

| | Persons in whose honour fairs are held | Place | Date |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Shah daulah | close to Gujrat | First Thursday in March (<i>phagun</i>) |
| 2. | Gazi Khokhar | one mile from Gujrat | First Thursday in <i>har</i> |
| 3. | Khangah Baba Sheikh Burhan Sahib | Lakhanwal | First Shawal and 10 th Zulhij |
| 4. | Shah Kutub Shah | Pindi, Miani | First Thursday of <i>maggar</i> |
| 5. | Khangah Hafiz Hyal | 6 miles from Gujrat | 19 th Muharram |
| 6. | Ker Bab Sammad Baba Numana | Phalian | First <i>baisakh</i> |
| 7. | Pir Kaila Jogi | Jalalpur | First <i>baisakh</i> |
| 8. | Syad Jumlah Shah Sahib | Khunan | First Muharram, one night |
| 9. | Guru Satram Sahib | Killadar Mandas | 15 th <i>asu</i> |
| 10. | Sher Ghazi Kharian Khangah | Chakori | First Shawal, 10 th Zulhij |
| 11. | At the mosque of Sharjdin Gujar | Chak Jani Karin | 13 th Zulhij |
| 12. | Kharian, Khankah Pir Hyat Candahari | Praq | First Thursday in <i>har</i> |

Source: Gazetteer of Gujrat District, 1883-84, 38-39.

Fairs in Shahpur District (iii)

| | Persons in whose honour fairs are held | Place | Date |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Pir Adam Sultan | Turtipur (6 miles south- west of Bhera) | 13 th , 14 th and 15 th of <i>sawan</i> |
| 2. | Shah Shahabal | Nabbi Shah (close to the Turtipur) | From 15 th to 20 th <i>asarh</i> |
| 3. | Shah Shams | Sheikhpur (adjoins Bhera) | Two last Sundays in <i>chet</i> and two first Sundays in <i>baisakh</i> |
| 4. | Shah Shabamadi | Hazara (on the banks of the Chenab) | 15 th <i>baisakh</i> |
| 5. | Pir Kayanath | Bhera | 15 th <i>phagan</i> |
| 6. | Sultan Habib | Dhrema (10 miles south- east of civil station) | From 25 th to end of Ramzan |
| 7. | Pir Sabz | Pir Sabz (6 miles north of Sahiwal) | 13 th <i>chet</i> |
| 8. | Jahania Shah | Jahania Shah (close to Nihang) | 6 th and 7 th <i>asarh</i> |
| 9. | Panj Pir | Nihang (10 miles south of Sahiwal) | First <i>magh</i> |
| 10. | Dial Bhawan | Girod | 30 th <i>chet</i> and First <i>baisakh</i> |
| 11. | Hafiz Diwan | Khushab | 20 th <i>chet</i> |

Source: Gazetteer of Shahpur District, 1883-84, 42.

Fairs in Jalandhar District (iv)

| | Persons in whose honour fairs are held | Place | Date |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | Tomb of Imam Nasir-ud-din | Jalandhar City | 8 days in June |
| 2. | Tomb of Saiyad Ali Mulla | Do | Muharrum |
| 3. | Tomb of Pir Sahib | Do | July |
| 4. | Bhikhan Sar | Alawalpur | April |
| 5. | Sumer Parbat | Do | January |
| 6. | Baba Thal Das | Jamsher | February |
| 7. | Guru Hazari | Nanakpur | April |
| 8. | Charn Kaul | Bangah | Do |
| 9. | Suraj Kund | Rahon | Do |
| 10. | Chauki Sultan | Mukandpur | July |
| 11. | Fath-i-Ali-Shah | Nurmahal | June |
| 12. | Chauki Sultan | Rurkah | February |
| 13. | Do | Bunduli | Do |
| 14. | Do | Jandialah | Do |
| 15. | Panj Kour | Nangal Ambia | September |
| 16. | Chhinj Fair | Shankar | October |

Source: Gazetteer of Jalandhar District, 1883-84, 21.

APPENDIX-II

Haqiqat Rai, the Martyr

Lala Bhag Mal Puri was a wealthy person of Sialkot. His son Haqiqat Rai was a promising lad of fourteen and like the sons of all those who lived by the pen, he was attending the *maktab* for acquiring knowledge of all the important branches of learning. In the *maktab* one day he entered into a discussion with a *mullazada* on a point relating to the composition of verses. Silenced by cogent argument on the point, the *mullazada* accused Haqiqat Rai of disrespect to the Prophet of Islam. The *musalmans* of the city supported the mullazada without a second thought and demanded that Haqiqat Rai should be punished for his blasphemy. Haqiqat Rai's parents and the Hindus of the city begged forgiveness on his behalf but they were given only two alternatives: either Haqiqat Rai should accept Islam or capital punishment. Bhag Mal bribed the corrupt officials and *maulavis* and succeeded in getting the case transferred to the court of the provincial governor, Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan, at Lahore.

When Haqiqat Rai accompanied the escorting soldiers to Lahore, a large number of Muslims from Sialkot and other places also started for Lahore to ensure that one of the alternatives suggested by them was adopted. On the way to Lahore, Haqiqat Rai was not allowed to ride a horse. In Lahore itself the *ulama*, the *qazis*, the *muftis* and other respectable people were persuaded by the *mullas* of Sialkot to accept their version of the situation. Zakariya Khan listened to all the witnesses and, from their conflicting evidence, concluded that Haqiqat Rai was innocent. His advisers suggested, however, that it would highly impolitic to go against the current of Muslim opinion. Zakariya Khan suggested to the boy that he may accept Islam but he curtly replied: 'If I become a *musalman* will I live for ever'? He was then offered the high *mansab* of three thousand, with a large *jagir*. But he did not care for these earthly prizes. Zakariya Khan left him then to the discretion of the *maulavis*. They decreed the punishment of death.

Bhag Mal requested that his son may be kept in custody for one night so that he may be persuaded to accept Islam. This request was granted. At night he tried to

argue with his son, saying that Islam too was good in its own way; in any case, life was precious. Haqiqat Rai underlined the narrowness of the creed of the orthodox Muslims and the relentlessness of their hostility to others, in contrast with the catholicity of the Persian poets. He told his father that he was not going to accept Islam. The ring of finality in his decision was so evident that his father and others departed in despair. In the morning, he was stoned nearly to death when he was beheaded by a soldier out of compassion.

The Hindus prayed that they may be allowed to cremate him according to Hindu rites. Their prayer was granted. Every Hindu contributed one thing or another towards the arrangements. A flower-seller of Lahore sold flowers worth one hundred and twenty rupees in half a *ghari*. The garland which he used to sell for half a *dam* fetched him more than six rupees on that day such was the feeling among the Hindus of Lahore for the martyr. A small *samadh* was built over the place of his cremation. People hold a fair there on the fifth of every month and regard it as a place of pilgrimage. In Sialkot itself his father made a *marhi* in his house. That too has become a place of pilgrimage.

Source: J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (tr. and eds.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab* (a part of Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, 152-154.

APPENDIX-III

Radhi, a sati

A Brahman named Sohna Ram in Gujrat had a comely daughter named Radhi. One day she was playing with other girls of her age when a handsome boy from Bhimbar, who had come to Gujrat to see his sister, happened to cast his eyes on her. They liked this innocent exchange of glances and the boy started coming to her *muhalla* on one pretext or another. In due course, Sohna Ram voluntarily betrothed his daughter to that young man. A day was fixed for their marriage on the advice of the astrologer. Radhi went to Bhimbar as a bride to serve with devotion the husband of her heart's desire.

Later, she came to Gujrat to see her parents. The young man too came in hot pursuit but only to find that his own sister's son was suffering from a mortal disease. When medicines failed, he prayed to God to take his life in place of the life of his sister's son. The child recovered and the young man fell ill. Medicine and charities proved to be of no avail and, as his end drew near, his eyes were filled with tears. Radhi gave him the assurance that the body alone was mortal; the spirit which it contained never died. If he was afraid of loneliness in the life hereafter she was prepared to accompany him. Her young husband died with a faint smile on his lips.

He was laid on the funeral pyre. Radhi announce that she would immolate herself. People tried to dissuade her but she replied that 'a woman without her husband was like a body without its head'. The news of her determination went around and people, including officials, flocked to the place to offer advice; they also offered riches and revenue-free land. A learned *pandit* of the city argued against immolation on the basis religious books in his possession. Radhi invoked the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and silenced the *pandit*, adding that even old age was no proof against slander. Everyone conceded that she had earned the right to become a *sati* whose rank in the life hereafter was higher than that of a warrior killed on the field of battle, a martyr in protection of the cow, and even a person who attained to the knowledge of God. Her ashes were taken to the Ganges and, at the spot where she had immolated herself, a small structure was raised as a place of worship. Many people go there for blessings and their prayers are granted by God.

Source: J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (tr. and eds.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab* (a part of Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, 154-155.

GLOSSARY

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Aam</i> | : | people who were excluded from charity. |
| <i>Achar</i> | : | pickle. |
| <i>Acharaj</i> | : | a Brahman who performed the obsequies of the dead and receives charities; also called <i>charji</i> . |
| <i>Adalati</i> | : | a touring justice under Sikh rule. |
| <i>Adharm</i> | : | injustice. |
| <i>Adhmarg</i> | : | ceremony of half way. |
| <i>Adi Granth</i> or <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> | : | sacred scripture of the Sikhs. |
| <i>Afim</i> | : | opium. |
| <i>Ahdnama</i> | : | agreement. |
| <i>Ahinsa</i> | : | non- violence. |
| <i>Akali</i> | : | also called <i>nihang</i> ; the militant followers of Guru Gobind Singh who regarded themselves to be the guardians of the faith. |
| <i>Akhara</i> | : | a place for wrestling or fencing or other sports; also a religious establishment of the <i>udasis</i> . |
| <i>Akhrot</i> | : | a walnut or a chestnut. |
| <i>Amavas</i> | : | moonless night. |
| <i>Amil</i> | : | a revenue collector; interchangeable with <i>kardar</i> as the administrator of a <i>taalluqa</i> . |
| <i>Amritdhari</i> | : | a Sikh who baptized or take <i>pahul</i> . |
| <i>Angarakha</i> | : | a long coat. |
| <i>Amb</i> | : | mango (<i>ambah</i>). |
| <i>Anna</i> | : | coin; one sixteenth of a rupee. |
| <i>Aqiqa</i> | : | a ceremony performed by the Muslims after the birth of a child. |
| <i>Ardas</i> | : | the Sikh prayer. |
| <i>Arsi</i> | : | a thumb ring decorated with very small looking glass. |
| <i>Asarh</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to June-July. |
| <i>Ashraf</i> | : | Muslim of high birth; nobles. |
| <i>Asu</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to October-November. |

Glossary

| | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Atar-dan</i> | : | a square jewelled pendent with a small box containing <i>atar</i> or perfume. |
| <i>Badam</i> | : | almond a dry fruit. |
| <i>Bagichis</i> | : | small orchards. |
| <i>Bairagi</i> | : | a renunciant; a member of the Vaishnava order of ascetics. |
| <i>Baisakh</i> | : | second month of an Indian calendar corresponding to April-May. |
| <i>Baisakhi</i> | : | a seasonal festival falls on first <i>baisakh</i> (April). |
| <i>Baithak</i> | : | drawing room; sitting room. |
| <i>Bajra</i> | : | a kind of millet. |
| <i>Bakr</i> | : | a goat. |
| <i>Bala</i> | : | ear-ring. |
| <i>Balcony</i> | : | gallery. |
| <i>Bang</i> | : | a call of prayer for Muslims performed by <i>mullah</i> . |
| <i>Bania</i> | : | a mercantile caste. |
| <i>Banjara</i> | : | a special class of traders, an exporter or carrier of grain; a street-seller or a peddler. |
| <i>Baradari</i> | : | a garden has twelve doors. |
| <i>Barfi</i> | : | a kind of sweet made of milk. |
| <i>Barat</i> | : | marriage procession or party. |
| <i>Barati</i> | : | members of marriage procession. |
| <i>Basant</i> | : | a seasonal festival marking the end of winter, the festival of spring. |
| <i>Basanti</i> | : | of yellowish colour, associated with the festival of Basant. |
| <i>Battewela</i> | : | lunch time. |
| <i>Bazar</i> | : | a market place. |
| <i>Bazigar</i> | : | an acrobat who performs feats of agility; a member of vagrant tribe. |
| <i>Bazuband</i> | : | a broad bell shaped ornament tied on the upper part of the arm by women. |
| <i>Begar</i> | : | literally means forced labour without payment. |
| <i>Be-choba</i> | : | a tent without pole. |
| <i>Beri</i> | : | a tree. |
| <i>Bhabi</i> | : | brother's wife. |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bhadon</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to August-September. |
| <i>Bhagat</i> | : | a Hindu devotee. |
| <i>Bhai</i> | : | brother; an epithet generally used for a Sikh formally connected with religious affairs, also an epithet of respect. |
| <i>Bhaichara</i> | : | clan brotherhood or a caste. |
| <i>Bhaji</i> | : | sweetmeats prepared for the wedding feast. |
| <i>Bhala</i> | : | fried cake of pulse flour. |
| <i>Bhand</i> | : | an actor; mimic; a buffoon; one who sings or recites verses of another to injure his character, one who lampoons another. |
| <i>Bhang</i> | : | dried leaves of the hemp plant; an intoxicant dry or potion, made from the leaves of cannabis sativa. |
| <i>Bhat</i> | : | a popular bard who kept genealogies of important families. |
| <i>Bhusa</i> | : | pale; pallid. |
| <i>Bhisht-bundi</i> | : | a sweetmeat with coating of sugar, gram and ghee. |
| <i>Bhutta</i> | : | corn cob of maize. |
| <i>Bichola</i> | : | intermediary; match maker especially for marriage. |
| <i>Bigha</i> | : | a measure of land generally considered equal to 20 <i>biswas</i> or 4 <i>kanals</i> . |
| <i>Bihdana</i> | : | a sweet jam made of quince seed. |
| <i>Bindli</i> | : | small tinsel like ornament of female. |
| <i>Bir-balian</i> | : | a female ornament, a set of rings worn all round the edge of the ear. |
| <i>Biradari</i> | : | a brotherhood. |
| <i>Bismillah</i> | : | initiation ceremony among Muslims. |
| <i>Bisram</i> | : | rest giving and the place of the halt or <i>basa dena</i> . |
| <i>Bohr</i> | : | a pendant of gold leaves worn in nose. |
| <i>Brahman</i> | : | the first of the four <i>varna</i> of Hindu social order. |
| <i>Bulak</i> | : | a female ornament worn in the nose. |
| <i>Bundi</i> | : | a kind of sweetmeat, some time coarse and some time with a coating of sugar. |
| <i>Bungas</i> | : | hospices; a building, using with special reference to residences built around the Harmandir Sahib by the Sikh Sardars and rulers. |

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| <i>Burka</i> | : | a veil covering the entire body and furnished with eye hole, generally worn by Muslim females. |
| <i>Champoo-i-mualla</i> | : | the exalted camp; a term used for the standing army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Chaddar</i> | : | a sheet of cloth; a shawl; a wrapper for upper and lower parts among men and women. |
| <i>Chaddar-pauna</i> | : | the ceremony of marrying a widow to a brother or an other relative of the deceased husband. It consists in having a single sheet spread over the contracting parties by the officiating priest. |
| <i>Chaharam</i> | : | literally, one fourth; the fourth share generally of the produce, and sometimes of the revenues. |
| <i>Chahwela</i> | : | morning meal or breakfast. |
| <i>Chali mukte</i> | : | forty immortals. |
| <i>Chamharli</i> | : | houses of the <i>chamars</i> generally in a separate enclosure. |
| <i>Charpoy</i> | : | a bedstead. |
| <i>Chat</i> | : | roof; ceiling. |
| <i>Chalis Mukta</i> | : | the forty immortals in the Sikhism. |
| <i>Chamar</i> | : | an untouchable caste of leather-workers and tanners. |
| <i>Champakali</i> | : | a necklace or buds of <i>champa</i> with many small golden beads hung into it. |
| <i>Chandan-har</i> | : | a multi-chained necklace. |
| <i>Chappan</i> | : | the lid of an earthen vessel. |
| <i>Chappan-bhannana</i> | : | a marriage ritual performed by the bridegroom with his feet. |
| <i>Chappati</i> | : | flat bread; thin loaf. |
| <i>Chatni</i> | : | a mixture of various condiments to add flavour to food or relishes. |
| <i>Chaubutra</i> | : | masonry platform; terrace; dais. |
| <i>Chaudhari</i> | : | the hereditary headman of a group of villages for collecting revenues on the behalf of Government. |
| <i>Chaumasa</i> | : | rainy season. |
| <i>Chaunki</i> | : | a wooden seat with four legs. |

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| <i>Chaunk-purna</i> : | a square prepared on the ground over which flour and perfumes were sprinkled by Brahman to obtain favourable omens from the planets on wedding occasions. |
| <i>Chaupal</i> : | meeting place; assembly hall. |
| <i>Chaupat</i> : | a game analogous to race game played with dice. |
| <i>Chhalla</i> : | a finger ring. |
| <i>Chhanani</i> : | a sieve. |
| <i>Chhand</i> : | any of several poetic forms or modes; songs; stanza or poem written in this mode. |
| <i>Chhap</i> : | a finger-ring of gold and silver or of any other metal. |
| <i>Chhathi</i> : | a ceremony performed on the sixth day after birth. |
| <i>Chhathi ka gusal</i> : | Muslims mother and child were bathed on the first Thursday or Sunday. |
| <i>Chhimba</i> : | a calico-dyer. |
| <i>Chhuchhak</i> : | a rite performed in Punjab after first confinement. |
| <i>Chhuhara</i> : | dried date, used especially on betrothal ceremonies. |
| <i>Chikha</i> : | a Hindu pyre. |
| <i>China</i> : | a crop; a sort of millet. |
| <i>Chirwe</i> : | parched rice partially boiled with the husk, then flattened and parched. |
| <i>Chogha</i> : | a robe. |
| <i>Choli</i> : | a short gown worn by women reaching only to the waist and covering their breast only; a jacket also called <i>angiya</i> . |
| <i>Chuha</i> : | mouse. |
| <i>Chuhra</i> : | the lowest untouchable caste, generally scavenger. |
| <i>Chuli-chhadna</i> : | a pre-death ritual in which a person would pour a few drops of water into a Brahman's hand symbolizing abstinence in the life before dying. |
| <i>Chunni</i> : | piece of cloth worn by a woman to cover her head. |
| <i>Chura</i> : | red and white bangles signified marital status of a woman. |
| <i>Churi</i> : | a bangle made of ivory or glass, worn by female on her arm. |
| <i>Churi</i> : | mixture of sugar, ghee and bread. |
| <i>Daftar</i> : | a part. |
| <i>Dai</i> : | a midwife. |

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| <i>Daj</i> | : | dowry given to a daughter. |
| <i>Dal</i> | : | pulse. |
| <i>Dal khalsa</i> | : | an adhoc combination of the forces of more than one Sardar for a specific purpose. |
| <i>Damri</i> | : | a small fraction of coin. |
| <i>Darbar</i> | : | the royal court, hall of audience; the holding of the court. |
| <i>Darbaris</i> | : | courtiers; a regular class of officials under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Darwaza</i> | : | door. |
| <i>Dasam Granth</i> | : | book written by tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh. |
| <i>Dasi</i> | : | female slaves. |
| <i>Dastar</i> | : | a turban. |
| <i>Datun</i> | : | twig or bark used for cleaning teeth. |
| <i>Deohri</i> | : | lofty porches. |
| <i>Dewar</i> | : | younger brother of the husband. |
| <i>Dhadi</i> | : | professional singer use <i>dhads</i> and <i>sarangi</i> to sing chivalrous. |
| <i>Dhaman</i> | : | a celebration performed after the birth of the boy. |
| <i>Dhania</i> | : | coriander. |
| <i>Dharm</i> | : | justice. |
| <i>Dharmarth</i> | : | literally by way of religious duty, land revenue alienated in the favour of a religious personage or institutions. |
| <i>Dharmpatni</i> | : | a wife also called <i>grihapatni</i> or <i>sahadharmini</i> . |
| <i>Dharamsala</i> | : | a place of worship of the Sikhs, also used for purpose of accommodation. |
| <i>Dhatura</i> | : | a thorn apple; its seeds are used as a poison; given medicinally in asthmatic complaints. |
| <i>Dhobi</i> | : | a washer man. |
| <i>Dhol</i> | : | a drum. |
| <i>Dholi</i> | : | a musician who plays the <i>dhol</i> or drum. |
| <i>Dhoti</i> | : | a cloth worn by Hindus round the waist and between the legs and fastened behind. |
| <i>Dhurkot</i> | : | outer mud walls. |
| <i>Diwali</i> | : | a Hindu festival designated as the festival of lights also called <i>deepawali</i> . |

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| <i>Diwan</i> | : | the finance minister; the head of finance department, manager. |
| <i>Diwankhana</i> | : | court chamber; audience hall. |
| <i>Diva</i> | : | a lamp. |
| <i>Diva karna</i> | : | one of the last ceremony in which a <i>diwa</i> (lamp) is placed near the dying person, supposedly to light his way. |
| <i>Doab</i> | : | the land lying between two rivers. |
| <i>Dola yatra</i> | : | the rocking of the image of Lord Krishna. It is performed during <i>holi</i> festival. |
| <i>Doli</i> | : | a palanquin; a small sedan or a litter for the bride; the occasion of a bride's departure. |
| <i>Doshala</i> | : | a pair of shawls. |
| <i>Dum</i> | : | a caste of Muslim musicians and bard who sang genealogies and other songs for their patrons. |
| <i>Dupatta</i> | : | a veil; a long scarf used by women as a head dress also called <i>chaddar</i> , <i>chuni</i> , <i>salu</i> and <i>shawl</i> . |
| <i>Durba</i> | : | grass. |
| <i>Durga puja</i> | : | feast of Goddess Durga. |
| <i>Dussehra</i> | : | a Hindu festival enacting the victory of Lord Ram Chander over Rawan also called <i>vijay dashmi</i> . |
| <i>Ekadashi</i> | : | eleventh day of the month in the <i>bikrami</i> calendar. |
| <i>Fakir</i> | : | an ascetic detached from worldly pursuits; a beggar a mendicant; also used for Sufis. |
| <i>Fal-quran</i> | : | naming ceremony among the Muslims. |
| <i>Farrash</i> | : | an attendant upon the flooring; a person in charge of flooring. |
| <i>Farwardin</i> | : | the first month of the Persian year (20 th or 21 st March). |
| <i>Faujdar</i> | : | the officer who maintained troops for law and order. |
| <i>Fiqh</i> | : | the Muslim ecclesiastical law. |
| <i>Gaddi</i> | : | seat of the head of a religious fraternity; a throne. |
| <i>Gajak</i> | : | sesame mixed with sugar and <i>khoya</i> or milk powder or <i>tiliwe</i> . |
| <i>Gajra</i> | : | an ornament worn on the wrist; a bracelet. |
| <i>Gali</i> | : | street; narrow pass. |
| <i>Gana</i> | : | a string of red, green and yellow cords tied on the wrist of the bridegroom and the bride. |
| <i>Gandh</i> | : | literally a knot; a tie. |

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| <i>Gandh-niqah</i> | : | fixing the date of marriage also called <i>gandh-pauna</i> . |
| <i>Gandh chitrna</i> | : | a rite in which garments of bride and bridegroom are knotted together by the women to signify their perpetual and inseparable union. |
| <i>Gandh-pherna</i> | : | intimation of the date of marriage. |
| <i>Gatka</i> | : | fencing; sword practice with wooden swords or sticks. |
| <i>Gau</i> | : | cow. |
| <i>Gaumukha</i> | : | a house with the front narrower than the back. |
| <i>Gawah</i> | : | a witness. |
| <i>Ghaggra</i> | : | a petticoat. |
| <i>Ghallughara</i> | : | a holocaust. |
| <i>Ghar</i> | : | a house. |
| <i>Ghari gharoli</i> | : | a marriage ritual in which the ladies brought water from the village well to perform the bathing ceremony. |
| <i>Gharwa</i> | : | medium-size pitcher like metal vessel. |
| <i>Ghee</i> | : | clarified butter. |
| <i>Ghori</i> | : | marriage songs sung during the wedding of the boy. |
| <i>Ghumiar</i> | : | a potter or maker of earthen wares. |
| <i>Ghund</i> | : | veil. |
| <i>Ghurchara</i> | : | literally a horse rider; a traditional horseman in the kingdom of Lahore. |
| <i>Ghurswari</i> | : | horsemanship. |
| <i>Ghusal</i> | : | bath. |
| <i>Giroh</i> | : | group of professionals. |
| <i>Got kulana</i> | : | a ritual for converting the bride into her husband's <i>got</i> or caste. |
| <i>Granthi</i> | : | the person in charge of the Sikh scripture in a religious place; or one who read out Guru Granth Sahib. |
| <i>Grishtha</i> | : | household; married life. |
| <i>Gudian patola</i> | : | playthings of small girls. |
| <i>Gulli-danda</i> | : | a game of tip cat. |
| <i>Guluband</i> | : | a necklace tightly fitted round the neck. It consisted of five or seven rose shape buttons of gold strings or silk. |
| <i>Gur</i> | : | coarse sugar or jaggery prepared from sugar-cane. |
| <i>Gurdwara</i> | : | generally the place of worship of the Sikhs. |

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| <i>Gurhati</i> | : | the first food of the child consisting of sugar or <i>gur</i> mixed with some purgative. |
| <i>Gurmatta</i> | : | a unanimous decision arrived by the Sikhs present before the Guru Granth Sahib. |
| <i>Guru</i> | : | a religious teacher or a spiritual guide. |
| <i>Hajjam</i> | : | a barber. |
| <i>Halwa</i> | : | a sweetmeat made of flour, ghee and sugar. |
| <i>Halwai</i> | : | a confectioner. |
| <i>Hamel</i> | : | a necklace. |
| <i>Har</i> | : | a necklace with a big number of chain or <i>chandan har</i> . |
| <i>Har</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to May-June. |
| <i>Harem</i> | : | female apartments. |
| <i>Harkara</i> | : | messenger; carrier. |
| <i>Hass-kar</i> | : | a collar of gold or silver, thick on the middle and thin at either end. |
| <i>Haveli</i> | : | large mansion; a multi storeyed residential building. |
| <i>Heena</i> | : | dried and powdered leaves of the plants of the same name used by women to dye hands, by men and women to dye feet and hair. |
| <i>Holi</i> | : | a well known Hindu festival of colours. |
| <i>Hukka</i> | : | an earthen or metallic pipe for smoking; hubble-bubble. |
| <i>Idgah</i> | : | mosque. |
| <i>Id-ul-bakr</i> | : | the Muslim religious festival observed on the 10 th day of the month <i>hajj</i> when goats are sacrificed. |
| <i>Id-ul-fitr</i> | : | the Muslim religious festival observed on the eve of new moon of the month Ramzan. |
| <i>Inam</i> | : | a reward. |
| <i>Ishqbazi</i> | : | love play or <i>kabutarbazi</i> . |
| <i>Jagir</i> | : | a piece of land give in lieu of salary; a <i>jagir</i> for personal service, a <i>jagir</i> also on account of the maintenance of horsemen. |
| <i>Jagirdar</i> | : | the holder of <i>jagir</i> . |
| <i>Jajman</i> | : | the client of a Brahman. |
| <i>Jalebi</i> | : | red curled sweetmeat fried in ghee. |

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| <i>Jal baradari</i> | : | bath. |
| <i>Jama</i> | : | a coat reaching down to the ankles. |
| <i>Jamadar</i> | : | the leader of a band of uncertain number; an officer above a <i>havaladar</i> in the regular army of the kingdom of the Lahore. |
| <i>Jamper</i> | : | a shirt. |
| <i>Janaza</i> | : | the Muslim burial procession or <i>mazal</i> . |
| <i>Janeo</i> | : | the sacred thread worn by Brahmans, Khatri and other Hindus of the twice born castes. |
| <i>Janampatri</i> | : | horoscope. |
| <i>Jangnama</i> | : | a genre of Punjabi poetry to narrate battles. |
| <i>Janj</i> | : | a marriage procession, a genre of Punjabi poetry meant to highlight the details of a bridal party or wedding guests. |
| <i>Janj-bannhna:</i> | | lock a <i>janj</i> . |
| <i>Janj-charhni</i> | : | the starting of the marriage party. |
| <i>Janj-dhukni</i> | : | the arrival of the marriage party in the bride's village or town. |
| <i>Janeo</i> | : | sacred thread. |
| <i>Jarrah</i> | : | a surgeon; generally a barber by caste. |
| <i>Jat</i> | : | the dominant agricultural caste in central Punjab. |
| <i>Jatha</i> | : | a group. |
| <i>Jeth</i> | : | an elder brother of the husband, month of May-June. |
| <i>Jhagra</i> | : | literally, a contention, a genre of Punjabi poetry meant to depict contention between two or more stereotyped social groups. |
| <i>Jhanjar</i> | : | a female ornament made of large hollow rings tied around the ankle. |
| <i>Jhatka</i> | : | slaughtering of an animal with a single stroke of the blade. |
| <i>Jhiwar</i> | : | water carrier. |
| <i>Jhumka</i> | : | a tassel like female ornament. |
| <i>Jigha</i> | : | a head ornament worn by males. |
| <i>Jogi</i> | : | from <i>yogi</i> , a renunciant belong to one or another of the twelve Gorakhnath orders. |
| <i>Jora randsala</i> | : | grab of widowhood. |
| <i>Jowar</i> | : | Indian millet. |
| <i>Jugni</i> | : | a female ornament; a single jewelled pendent hanging from a string of silk. |

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| <i>Julaha</i> | : | a weaver by caste. |
| <i>Kachori</i> | : | fried sandwich of wheat flour stuffed with bruised pluses. |
| <i>Kaffan</i> | : | coffin; a shroud. |
| <i>Kahar</i> | : | a palanquin-bearer or water-drawer by caste. |
| <i>Kajal</i> | : | the lamp black with which eye-lids were painted. |
| <i>Kalal</i> | : | a brewer or distiller by caste. |
| <i>Kalgi</i> | : | a plume; a feather worn in a cap or turban. |
| <i>Kalikand</i> | : | a kind of sweetmeat made of milk. |
| <i>Kalma</i> | : | the Muslim confession of faith. |
| <i>Kamam</i> | : | artisans. |
| <i>Kambals</i> | : | blanket. |
| <i>Kamboh</i> | : | a caste in the Punjab, known for industrious and skilful cultivation. |
| <i>Kamin</i> | : | a village servant of low caste. |
| <i>Kanat</i> | : | canvas screen. |
| <i>Kandha-dena</i> | : | give shoulder to corpse for cremation or burial ground. |
| <i>Kangni</i> | : | a kind of millet, broken fragment of rice. |
| <i>Kangan</i> | : | a gold or silver bracelet worn by men and women also called <i>kara</i> , <i>churie</i> or <i>gajrah</i> . |
| <i>Kangana</i> | : | see <i>gana</i> . |
| <i>Kanjari</i> | : | a prostitute or a strumpet. |
| <i>Kanphata</i> | : | a Gorakhnath <i>jogi</i> whose ears were pierced for earrings to mark his status as an adept. |
| <i>Kanphul</i> | : | a tassel like ornament made of silver chains, worn by females in the ears. |
| <i>Kanwar</i> | : | prince. |
| <i>Kanyadan</i> | : | giving away one's daughter in marriage, also called <i>hathlewa</i> . |
| <i>Kapal kirya</i> | : | breaking of the skull. |
| <i>Kara</i> | : | a bracelet. |
| <i>Kardar</i> | : | an agent; an official; a revenue collector of a <i>taalluqa</i> or <i>pargana</i> . |
| <i>Karewa</i> | : | a form of marriage in which a widow could remarry either the eldest (<i>jeth</i>) or the youngest (<i>dewar</i>) brother of her deceased husband. |

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| <i>Kartika</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to October-November. |
| <i>Katari</i> | : | a small dagger. |
| <i>Khilkat</i> | : | people who lived in charity. |
| <i>Khajur</i> | : | a sort of palm cake-sweetmeat. |
| <i>Khalifa</i> | : | a vice agent of the Prophet Muhammad. |
| <i>Khalsa</i> | : | the Sikh brotherhood instituted by Guru Gobind Singh, used for an individual as well as the collective body. |
| <i>Khanqah</i> | : | a religious establishment; generally of the Sufi recluses. |
| <i>Kharif</i> | : | the autumnal harvest; sown in April-May before the commencement of the rains and reaped in October-November. |
| <i>Khat</i> | : | a bedstead; dowry; presents given to a bride by her parents. |
| <i>Khatri</i> | : | warrior or ruling caste (<i>kshatriya</i>) of traditional Hindu society; Hindu business class in the Punjab. |
| <i>Kheer</i> | : | rice cooked in sweetened milk; rice pudding. |
| <i>Khes</i> | : | a kind of heavy cotton shawl or sheet; a cotton substitute for blanket. |
| <i>Khichari</i> | : | a dish of rice mixed with lentil. |
| <i>Khido-khundi</i> | : | a game; rural and rustic type of hockey. |
| <i>Khidmatgar</i> | : | attendant. |
| <i>Khillat</i> | : | a dress of honour; any article of costume presented by the ruling or superior authority to junior as a mark of distinction. |
| <i>Khoja</i> | : | a caste of Muslim traders. |
| <i>Khuh</i> | : | well or <i>kuwan</i> . |
| <i>Kimkhab</i> | : | a cloth of silk flowered with gold and silver; brocade. |
| <i>Kirar</i> | : | the term was loosely used for Hindu Bania caste. |
| <i>Koka</i> | : | a nose-pin or a flower bud. |
| <i>Kotha dussehrawala</i> | : | various kinds of floorings and carpets spread out in the place known as <i>kotha</i> for <i>dussehra</i> festival. |
| <i>Kotwal</i> | : | chief police officer. |
| <i>Khoti</i> | : | spacious elegant house; bungalow. |
| <i>Kuccha</i> | : | raw; unbaked; temporary. |
| <i>Kulcha</i> | : | a kind of bun or bread roll. |
| <i>Kumhar</i> | : | the potter caste. |

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| <i>Kurmai</i> | : | a betrothal; an engagement ceremony prior to marriage. |
| <i>Kurta</i> | : | a shirt. |
| <i>Kurti</i> | : | half shirt; waistcoat; ladies blouse. |
| <i>Khusti</i> | : | wrestling. |
| <i>Kutabkhani</i> | : | small sugar coated ball; a sweetmeat. |
| <i>Lacha</i> | : | a covering sheet with a woven border of red silk; generally used as a lower wear by men and women. |
| <i>Laddoo</i> | : | a common sweetmeat made from droplets of gram flour paste fried in cooking oil and soaked in sugar syrup and then rolled into balls. |
| <i>Lag</i> | : | reward for work done at various social and religious ceremonies by persons of menial and artisan classes. |
| <i>Lagan</i> | : | auspicious time for marriage; auspicious occasion or ceremony. |
| <i>Lagi</i> | : | persons of artisan and menial castes performing service on social occasion like marriage, betrothal and death. They were paid for the services or the goods they provided on such occasions. |
| <i>Lahad</i> | : | among Muslims a chamber made inside the grave in which the corpse is finally placed and walled with bricks and close from above. |
| <i>Lahanga</i> | : | skirt; petticoat; also called <i>ghagra</i> . |
| <i>Lamberdar</i> | : | village headman. |
| <i>Langoti</i> | : | small trouser loincloth; wrestler's drawers. |
| <i>Lanka</i> | : | an artificial fort like <i>lanka</i> raised during <i>dussehra</i> festival where the mock battles were fought and effiges of Rawan Kumbhkaran and Meghnath were raised during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Lara</i> | : | the bridegroom. |
| <i>Lassi</i> | : | curd-milk; sweetened solution of milk and water. |
| <i>Lassi-mundri</i> | : | a martial ceremony in which the new weds competes in search for a ring dropped in a pot full of curd milk (<i>lassi</i>). |
| <i>Latkan</i> | : | a nose ornament of pendent put on the <i>nath</i> and stringing from it. |
| <i>Laung</i> | : | a nose pin. |

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| <i>Lava-parna</i> | : | recitation of the sacred <i>mantras</i> from the <i>shastras</i> by the religious priest to solemnize a wedding which consisted of tying together the upper garments of the bride and the bridegroom, and making them go four or seven times round the kindled fire. |
| <i>Lilari</i> | : | a dyer. |
| <i>Lohri</i> | : | the first festival of the New Year of Christian era. |
| <i>Lohar</i> | : | a blacksmith. |
| <i>Loi</i> | : | a woolen sheet or blanket; black or white. |
| <i>Loon</i> | : | salt. |
| <i>Luchi</i> | : | a kind of thin cake made of fine flour and cooked in ghee. |
| <i>Lungi</i> | : | a cloth used as garment for lower body by men and women. |
| <i>Loung</i> | : | clove. |
| <i>Machhli be-sar</i> | : | a ornament worn in the nose also called <i>machhlian be sir</i> and <i>be sar</i> . |
| <i>Magh</i> | : | the eleventh month of an <i>bikrami</i> calendar corresponding to January and February. |
| <i>Maghi</i> | : | the first day of the month of <i>magh</i> . |
| <i>Mahant</i> | : | the head of a religious order or establishment. |
| <i>Mahr</i> | : | ante nuptial. |
| <i>Mahurat</i> | : | a auspicious time for engaging in any enterprise or business. |
| <i>Maian</i> | : | a mixture of oil and some fragrant substances having the property of making skin soft. |
| <i>Maian-pauna</i> | : | a ceremony performed for bride or a bridegroom a few days before nuptials. |
| <i>Majhla</i> | : | a kind of trouser usually worn by the Muslims. |
| <i>Makan</i> | : | house, apartment, residential building, lamentation. |
| <i>Makhana</i> | : | a sweetmeat made with cardamom seeds. |
| <i>Makki</i> | : | name of crop grown in rainy season. |
| <i>Makmal</i> | : | velvet. |
| <i>Maktab</i> | : | an indigenous Muslim school where Persian and Arabic were taught. |
| <i>Mala</i> | : | a rosary; a chaplet of beads. |
| <i>Manda</i> | : | very thin bread or a thin cake baked on a wide iron plate. |
| <i>Mandi</i> | : | market. |

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| <i>Masalchi</i> | : | a torch bearer, generally from the caste of <i>telis</i> . |
| <i>Matam</i> | : | condolence; gloom or mourning. |
| <i>Mathi</i> | : | a round flat fried bread. |
| <i>Matth</i> | : | a monastery or a religious establishment. |
| <i>Mauli</i> | : | a ornament of big chain made of rows of pearls separated by jeweled studs, hanging from the head on one side was called <i>mauli</i> . |
| <i>Maulavi</i> | : | a Muslim priest. |
| <i>Mauza</i> | : | a village; a parcel or parcels of land having separate in revenue records. |
| <i>Mayyit</i> | : | same as bier among Muslims. |
| <i>Mazal</i> | : | a funeral procession among Muslims. |
| <i>Mazhabi</i> | : | a caste of sweepers or scavengers who became Sikhs. |
| <i>Mehndi</i> | : | henna, used for dyeing hands and fingers. |
| <i>Mela</i> | : | a fair. |
| <i>Mewa</i> | : | a fruit, generally the name is used for the dry fruits. |
| <i>Mian</i> | : | a gentleman; a general title of respect among Muslims; also a schoolmaster. |
| <i>Milni</i> | : | the formal reception of the marriage party by the kinsmen of the bride when presents were offered to the close relations of the bridegroom. |
| <i>Mirasi</i> | : | a caste of Mohammedans, employed as musicians, bards and genealogists. |
| <i>Mirasian</i> | : | wife of <i>mirasi</i> . |
| <i>Mirch</i> | : | chilly. |
| <i>Misl</i> | : | strictly a group of soldiers. |
| <i>Misldar</i> | : | the commandant of a <i>misl</i> . |
| <i>Misr</i> | : | title or form of address for Brahman. |
| <i>Mochi</i> | : | a shoe-maker or a cobbler, generally Muslim. |
| <i>Mohalla</i> | : | street. |
| <i>Mohan-bhog</i> | : | a sweetmeat. |
| <i>Mohan mala</i> | : | a necklace with large gold beads, with an interval of gold twisted thread between each bead. |
| <i>Mohurs</i> | : | pieces of coins in the shape of a string of gold. |

Glossary

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| <i>Morchas</i> | : | embrasures. |
| <i>Morni</i> | : | a small pendent shaped and looking like the spread out tail of peacock. |
| <i>Moth</i> | : | a plant grown for fodder and pulse. |
| <i>Muharram</i> | : | the first month of the <i>hijri</i> calendar or the month of mourning. |
| <i>Muklawā</i> | : | the occasion when husband taking away the wife from her parental home at the age of puberty. |
| <i>Muket</i> | : | a crown worn by the bridegroom. |
| <i>Mullah</i> | : | a Muslim priest and teacher, generally in-charge of the mosque. |
| <i>Mundan</i> | : | first tonsure or hair cutting. |
| <i>Mundri</i> | : | a finger ring. |
| <i>Munkir-Nakir</i> | : | the two angels, according to Muslim belief, who record all the goods and bad deeds of the man's life. |
| <i>Munshi</i> | : | a writer or a scribe; a clerk; a person in charge of an office. |
| <i>Muqaddam</i> | : | the headman of the village. |
| <i>Muraba</i> | : | preserved fruit, jam. |
| <i>Murki</i> | : | a small ear ring commonly of gold and silver. |
| <i>Nai</i> | : | a barber. |
| <i>Namaz</i> | : | the Muslim prayer. |
| <i>Namaz-janaza</i> | : | a prayer offered by the relatives of the deceased at the time of the funeral procession. |
| <i>Nange</i> | : | literally naked, unclad ascetic; a meditant order of naked <i>sadhu</i> . |
| <i>Nath</i> | : | a nose-ring. |
| <i>Natchnwali</i> | : | dancing girls. |
| <i>Natt</i> | : | a typical gipsy caste of the Punjab whose profession is similar to that of the <i>bazigar</i> ; the acrobat. |
| <i>Nauroz</i> | : | the most popular of all the Iranian festivals, heralding spring and the beginning of the New Year. |
| <i>Navgrah puja</i> | : | worship of the nine stars. |
| <i>Nau ratan</i> | : | a band consisting of nine gems set side by side and tied by silk ties. |
| <i>Nawab</i> | : | a high ranking feudal title; governor; a noble. |
| <i>Nazar</i> | : | a present, an offering specially one from an inferior to a superior or to a holy man or to a prince; a present in general. |

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| <i>Nazarana</i> | : | the tribute paid by a vassal, also, paid by an official on a regular basis or on special occasions. |
| <i>Nazim</i> | : | an administrator; the governor of a Province. |
| <i>Neunda</i> | : | an invitation to the feast, also, cash contribution on occasion of marriage. |
| <i>Neuza</i> | : | the Kabuli nuts. |
| <i>Neza-bazi</i> | : | tent-pegging. |
| <i>Nigaha</i> | : | a shrine associated with Sultan Sakhi Sarwar, a legendary saint, whose tomb is situated in the Dera Ghazi Khan district. |
| <i>Nihang</i> | : | used for <i>akali</i> . |
| <i>Nikah sani</i> | : | widow remarriage among Muslim. |
| <i>Nikasi</i> | : | a marital rite observed by Muslims. |
| <i>Niranjaniyas</i> | : | the sect of <i>udasi</i> . |
| <i>Nirban</i> | : | the sect of <i>udasi</i> . |
| <i>Nirmala</i> | : | a particular section of Sikhs. |
| <i>Nugdi</i> | : | a sweetmeat made of gram flour roasted in butter or oil. |
| <i>Pacca</i> | : | hard; firm; strong. |
| <i>Pagri</i> | : | a turban. |
| <i>Pahul</i> | : | baptism of the double-edged sword by Guru Gobind Singh for the Khalsa. |
| <i>Pakwan</i> | : | cooked dishes; delicious. |
| <i>Palangh</i> | : | a bedstead of the best sort. |
| <i>Panch</i> | : | a member of the <i>panchayat</i> . |
| <i>Panchratans</i> | : | five metals of gold, pearl, copper, silver and coral. |
| <i>Pandit</i> | : | a Brahman, whether learned or not. |
| <i>Pani-varna</i> | : | a marital ritual of welcoming new wed couple by groom's mother. |
| <i>Panjeb</i> | : | a tinkling silver ornament worn on the ankles by females. |
| <i>Panjiri</i> | : | a preparation of wheat flour fried in ghee or cooking oil and mixed with sugar and dry fruits. |
| <i>Panth</i> | : | Sikh community. |
| <i>Parakari</i> | : | a sweetmeat, a small cake made double with sugar between the two parts and fried in ghee. |
| <i>Parat</i> | : | metal tray. |

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| <i>Pargana</i> | : | the administrative sub-division of a <i>suba</i> under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Parkarma</i> | : | circumambulation. |
| <i>Parshad</i> | : | sweetmeat offered to the deities. |
| <i>Pashmina</i> | : | from <i>pashm</i> or shall, a kind of wool from the Tibetan goat. |
| <i>Patangbazi</i> | : | kite flying. |
| <i>Patasa</i> | : | a kind of sweetmeat made with sugar bubbles. |
| <i>Patka</i> | : | a cloth worn round the waist; girdle; a coarse kind of cloth. |
| <i>Pattidar</i> | : | literally, the holder of a share, used for virtually autonomous co-sharers of the early conquerors reduced later to the position of hereditary <i>jagirdar</i> . |
| <i>Patwari</i> | : | village record keeper. |
| <i>Pera</i> | : | a kind of sweetmeat made from milk paste. |
| <i>Phagun</i> | : | twelfth month of <i>bikrami</i> calendar correspondence to February–March. |
| <i>Phare-laina</i> | : | a ceremony in which the bridegroom followed by the bride four or seven times in a circle round the holy fire. |
| <i>Phul</i> | : | ashes. |
| <i>Phul-chugna</i> | : | pick up or collect ashes after cremation. |
| <i>Phul-patri</i> | : | among the Muslims the deceased's heirs placed some palm leaves, flowers and green leaves of a fruit tree on his grave. |
| <i>Phuli</i> | : | a small nose ring with a diamond of usually green colour. |
| <i>Phulkari</i> | : | embroidered cloth; a shawl. |
| <i>Pind</i> | : | a ball made of rice or flour and mixed with ghi, sugar, milk, curds, flowers etc. offered to the soul of the deceased for its use until its final departure for the next world which is supposed to take place on the thirteenth day. |
| <i>Pinja</i> | : | a cotton carder. |
| <i>Pipal</i> | : | a particular kind of tree. |
| <i>Pipal-pattre</i> | : | an earring having a pendent, ending in a fringe of small leaves like those of the <i>pipal</i> tree also called <i>peepal vatti</i> or <i>pipal pati</i> . |
| <i>Pir</i> | : | a saint of high merit who could act as a guide among the Muslims. |
| <i>Pirzada</i> | : | literally, the son of a saint (<i>pir</i>); used also for a descendant. |

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| <i>Pitna</i> | : | beating of breast and thighs; <i>siapa</i> . |
| <i>Pitr</i> | : | forefathers or ancestors. |
| <i>Pitr-puja</i> | : | offering gifts and food in the name of deceased ancestors. |
| <i>Poh</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to December-January. |
| <i>Post</i> | : | a poppy plant. |
| <i>Pujari</i> | : | an attendant of temple. |
| <i>Puri</i> | : | a small cake fried in ghee; a fritter or a batter cake. |
| <i>Purohit</i> | : | a family priest who conduct social and religious ceremonies of Hindus and Sikhs. |
| <i>Putra</i> | : | son. |
| <i>Pyjama</i> | : | trouser. |
| <i>Qalandar</i> | : | a sufi of the <i>qalandari</i> orders; also a professional who performed monkey and bear shows in the countryside. |
| <i>Qanungo</i> | : | a hereditary keeper of the revenue records at the <i>pargana</i> or the <i>taalluqa</i> level. |
| <i>Qaum</i> | : | caste. |
| <i>Qazi</i> | : | Muslim judge or interpreter of the Islamic law. |
| <i>Qayamat</i> | : | day of judgement; doomsday. |
| <i>Qissa</i> | : | from Arabic <i>qissah</i> , fable, story, narration, folktale, genre of romantic Punjabi poetry. |
| <i>Qissakar</i> | : | a composer or writer of <i>qissa</i> . |
| <i>Qul-fil-hal</i> | : | to recite certain verses from the Quran for the peace and benefit of the departed soul. |
| <i>Qul-khawai</i> | : | the first food among Muslims after burial ceremony. |
| <i>Quran</i> | : | a religious text of the Muslims. |
| <i>Rababi</i> | : | one who play on <i>rabab</i> , a kind of violin with three strings. |
| <i>Rabi</i> | : | Spring harvest. |
| <i>Ragi</i> | : | a singer of the verses in the Sikh scripture. |
| <i>Rahatnama</i> | : | code of conduct for <i>amritdhari</i> Sikhs. |
| <i>Raja</i> | : | a king, also the title. |
| <i>Rakhi</i> | : | literally, protection, a transitional arrangement signifying essentially the Sikh chief's claim to a part of the produce from land in return for protection afforded against other claimants. |

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| <i>Ramzan</i> | : | the ninth month of the <i>hijri</i> calendar when fast or <i>roja</i> is observed by Muslims. |
| <i>Reetan</i> | : | pre-birth rites. |
| <i>Reori</i> | : | sweets or small balls of solidified sugar covered with sesame seeds. |
| <i>Sadhu</i> | : | a saint; a monk; a mendicant; an ascetic. |
| <i>Safa</i> | : | a small close fitting turban (coloured) called <i>safa</i> came down over the forehead. |
| <i>Saffan-bannhna:</i> | | to stand or assemble in rows for a religious prayer during Muslim death observances. |
| <i>Saggai</i> | : | betrothal or <i>kurmai</i> . |
| <i>Saha</i> | : | propitious time or date for marriage and other auspicious events. |
| <i>Saha-sudhauna:</i> | | determining of a <i>saha</i> by a Brahman astrologer. |
| <i>Saha chithi</i> or <i>Pili chithi</i> | : | a letter notifying date of marriage written on yellow page. |
| <i>Salu</i> | : | a kind of cloth used as head dress by the ladies, also used for turbans by boys. |
| <i>Saluna</i> | : | salted or tasty cooked food, also a plant common in arid places in the salt range and the Trans-Indus region, which is eaten raw, and in some places used as a potherb. |
| <i>Salvar</i> | : | pantaloons made exceedingly full except at the ankles; a female lower wear; baggy trousers. |
| <i>Samadh</i> | : | the tomb over the relics of a dead body. |
| <i>Sambat</i> | : | Indian calendar era, particular or specified year of an Indian calendar. |
| <i>Samosa</i> | : | a kind of salt cake filled with potato. |
| <i>Sangrand</i> | : | the first day of the month according to <i>bikrami</i> era also called <i>sankranti</i> . |
| <i>Sankalap</i> | : | literally a vow; or consecrating a thing to God; a part of the Hindu death ritual when a dying person gives some gifts, of a cow to a Brahman in charity. |
| <i>Sannyasi</i> | : | one who renounced the world; a general term for a religious ascetic. |

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| <i>Sarangi</i> | : | a violin. |
| <i>Sarbala</i> | : | a boy or a male escort to a bridegroom. |
| <i>Sardar</i> | : | a chief; a headman. |
| <i>Sarkar</i> | : | a title of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; the king's court; government; the head of a civil administration. |
| <i>Sarkar-i-wala</i> | : | a form of address used for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Sarpech</i> | : | a silver lace ornament attached to a turban. |
| <i>Sarson</i> | : | green rape. |
| <i>Sarwana</i> | : | moving money round the head of someone whose well-being is wished and then given away. |
| <i>Sather-lauhna</i> | : | a pre-death ritual when a dying person was lifted from the cot and placed on the ground. |
| <i>Sati</i> | : | a widow who immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. |
| <i>Sattu</i> | : | flour of parched barley. |
| <i>Sawan</i> | : | month of an Indian calendar corresponding to July-August. |
| <i>Sayyid</i> | : | a descendant of Prophet Muhammad especially one of his grandson Husain, held venerable by the rulers and the people alike. |
| <i>Sehra</i> | : | a chaplet; a golden lace hanging on the forehead of the groom. |
| <i>Serai</i> | : | a public inn run for the benefit of travellers. |
| <i>Sevian</i> | : | a sweet, milky pudding. |
| <i>Shagan</i> | : | omen; betrothal; gifts usually made in cash and kind given to bride or bridegroom on the occasion of marriage, or to a child on his or her birth. |
| <i>Shahwela</i> | : | evening meal. |
| <i>Shahukar</i> | : | a wealthy businessman; a money lender. |
| <i>Shahzada</i> | : | prince. |
| <i>Shakar-para</i> | : | a sweetmeat of small sugar coated balls, cubes of flour dough fried and coated with sugar. |
| <i>Shalabagh</i> | : | a moving throne. |
| <i>Shamiana</i> | : | a big tent. |
| <i>Sharbat</i> | : | syrup. |
| <i>Shariat</i> | : | the Islamic law. |

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| <i>Shastra</i> | : | the Hindu holy code; religious books of Hindus. |
| <i>Shatranj</i> | : | the game of chess. |
| <i>Sheikh</i> | : | the head of a religious fraternity; the title taken by the descendants of Prophet Muhammad. |
| <i>Sher-dahan</i> | : | a house with the front wider than the back. |
| <i>Shia</i> | : | the Muslim sect that asserts the leadership of Islam is hereditary in the descendants of Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad. |
| <i>Shivala</i> | : | a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. |
| <i>Si-harfi</i> | : | a genre of Punjabi poetry in <i>bait</i> metre with a series of Persian alphabets in the beginning of the each stanza. |
| <i>Silver Bunglow</i> | : | a moveable double storey building construction during reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. |
| <i>Sindur</i> | : | vermillion. |
| <i>Singhara</i> | : | the water caltrop which bears brown horny fruit with long spines. |
| <i>Sir-phul</i> or <i>Sis-phul</i> | : | female head ornament, a raised bell shaped piece of gold or silver, hollow and embellished from inside also called <i>chaunk</i> . |
| <i>Sithni</i> | : | obscene or abusive songs sung by women at wedding. |
| <i>Stridhan</i> | : | woman's property. |
| <i>Suba</i> | : | a province or the primary division of an empire. |
| <i>Sufi</i> | : | a class of Muslim mystics. |
| <i>Suhag-chura</i> | : | red and white bangles wear by married ladies. |
| <i>Sukha</i> | : | an intoxicant herb or drug. |
| <i>Suniar</i> | : | a goldsmith. |
| <i>Sunnat</i> | : | ceremony of circumcision. |
| <i>Sunni</i> | : | name of Muslim sect. |
| <i>Surkhi</i> | : | a red paint with which women colour their lips. |
| <i>Surma</i> | : | antimony used to beautify the eyes. |
| <i>Surma pavai</i> | : | a marriage ritual in which <i>bhabhi</i> (brother's wife) put <i>surma</i> (antimony) into bridegroom's eyes. |
| <i>Susi</i> | : | a smooth cloth with coloured stripes used for women's trousers. |
| <i>Sutak</i> | : | child birth; impurity or uncleanness associated by Hindu custom with birth in a house. |

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| <i>Suthan</i> | : | loose trousers worn by women. |
| <i>Taalluqa</i> | : | the term was most commonly used under Sikh rule for the administrative unit next to the province. |
| <i>Taalluqdar</i> | : | the holder of a superior right over land. |
| <i>Tabqa</i> | : | class. |
| <i>Tahkhana</i> | : | underground chamber; basement. |
| <i>Takhta</i> | : | a wooden plank bier for carrying the corpses. |
| <i>Talwarbazi</i> | : | swordsmanship. |
| <i>Tambol</i> | : | a ceremony of bestowing gifts in cash and kinds to bride and bridegroom. |
| <i>Tandur</i> | : | oven. |
| <i>Taragi</i> | : | a string tied round the waist of male children. |
| <i>Tarkhan</i> | : | a carpenter. |
| <i>Tausila</i> | : | a kind of cloth which is stripped like <i>susi</i> . |
| <i>Tawit</i> | : | a charm or an amulet. |
| <i>Tazia</i> | : | effigies are made to commemorate the massacre of Husain and Hasan descendants of the Prophet, taken in procession and buried on the occasion of his martyrdom anniversary. |
| <i>Tehmad</i> | : | a sheet used as garment for lower body. |
| <i>Tel-charhauna</i> | : | see <i>maian-pauna</i> . |
| <i>Tel-chona</i> | : | dropping of some oil on the door upon the entry of the guests or one's departure from home. |
| <i>Teli</i> | : | an oil-presser. |
| <i>Than</i> | : | a place of Goddess Sitla. |
| <i>Thara</i> | : | platform of masonry or earthwork; a local shrine outside the village raised over a platform of mud. |
| <i>Tikka</i> | : | a small pendent, a female ornament worn on forehead also called <i>sir mang</i> . |
| <i>Til-khelna</i> | : | a marriage ritual. |
| <i>Tind</i> | : | an earthen pot tied with Persian wheel to bring up water. |
| <i>Tinka-torna</i> | : | a death ritual. |
| <i>Tith</i> | : | date of the Indian month. |
| <i>Topi</i> | : | a hat or cap. |
| <i>Topkhana</i> | : | the artillery unit. |

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| <i>Toshe ki roti</i> | : | bread for the journey. |
| <i>Tuladan</i> | : | weighted against amount. |
| <i>Udasi</i> | : | literally, a renunciant, viewed traditionally as a follower of Sri Chand son of Guru Nanak, who founded <i>udasi</i> sect. |
| <i>Ulema</i> | : | learned person; doctors of Islamic law and theology. |
| <i>Upanayana</i> | : | ceremony of initiation. |
| <i>Urf or Firqa</i> | : | community. |
| <i>Vag pharai</i> | : | a marriage ritual in which bridegroom's sisters held the reins of his mare. |
| <i>Vali</i> | : | a set of ear rings. |
| <i>Vain</i> | : | loud lamentation by female mourners after some one's death. |
| <i>Vakil</i> | : | an agent; a deputy; an envoy; the representative of a ruler. |
| <i>Vala</i> | : | an earring. |
| <i>Vang</i> | : | a bracelet of glass or plastic. |
| <i>Var</i> | : | a genre of Punjabi poetry; also a day of the week. |
| <i>Varna</i> | : | the fourfold order in the Brahmanical system. |
| <i>Vara-sui</i> | : | clothes, ornaments and dry fruits were sent to the bride the groom's father. |
| <i>Vari</i> | : | the dresses and ornaments presented to bride by her in-laws. |
| <i>Vasant rag</i> | : | Spring songs. |
| <i>Vatti</i> | : | wick. |
| <i>Vedi</i> | : | a wooden pavilion set in the house for conducting Hindu wedding. |
| <i>Verandah</i> | : | a courtyard. |
| <i>Vidai</i> | : | departure of the bride. |
| <i>Vivaha</i> | : | marriage. |
| <i>Watna</i> | : | see <i>maian</i> |
| <i>Zamburk</i> | : | swivel. |
| <i>Zamindar</i> | : | a landholder. |
| <i>Zanjiri</i> | : | a chain or necklace of five chains. |
| <i>Zanakh</i> | : | the toes of the hands and feet were tied together with a piece of cloth of decess. |
| <i>Zeera</i> | : | cumin seed. |

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| <i>Zenana</i> | : | the apartment of a house in which women of the family were secluded. |
| <i>Zer-e- Zamin</i> | : | underground cells for rest in summer. |
| <i>Zigha</i> | : | an ornament of jewel worn in the turban. |

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